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TEACHERS ON SCHOOLS

To the editors:

Phil Keisling evidently has it in for teachers ("How to Save the Public Schools," TNR, November 1). Their S.A.T. scores are not high enough; they take "stultifying" courses; they belong to unions; they favor that "great liberal shibboleth of 'due process' "; and, apparently, they can make too much money to suit his taste. He does not shrink from fixing the blame for all this. Is it the workings of the market economy? No, we learn, it is largely the teachers' own fault.

The low and feminized average teacher salary of $17,209—after a median service of twelve years—is not wildly attractive to bright, career-minded college graduates. In some places teachers' salaries are so low that, if they support a family, they may qualify for food stamps. Moreover, teacher salaries are in relentless decline: using 1980 constant dollars, the average teacher salary is worth $1,000 less than it was in 1973. An editorial in the May 5 NEW REPUBLIC ("Savaging the Schools") put it neatly: "... the market incentives toward careers in education, to use the Reagan logic, are not strong."

Better schools require better and smarter teachers. But the better and smarter teachers are the very ones who can, and increasingly do, opt for the better paid jobs outside of the schools. This is the real lesson for the public and private schools. Remedies that further squeeze teachers are likely to aggravate this problem enormously.

H. G. VONK
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, Florida

To the editors:

Teachers' unions are not responsible for the retention of incompetents in their profession, as Phil Keisling avers. There is no evidence that unfit teachers were systematically removed by public school administrators before the A.F.T. and N.E.A. gained their present limited influence in some districts. There is every evidence that bad teachers gained tenure, that good teachers were arbitrarily dismissed by prejudiced bureaucrats for nonsensical reasons, and that such cases still occur frequently despite increased union power. Unions are absolutely necessary for the protection of civil liberties in a uniquely vulnerable profession.

J. QUINN BRISBEN
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

The A.F.T. and N.E.A. have insisted upon seniority for layoffs only because management in the public schools has generally failed to develop a fair and dispassionate method for merit evaluation. Grim experience has taught both unions that the reason school boards want the power to unilaterally dismiss teachers is not to improve the quality of teachers but to intimidate teachers and to bludgeon them into unquestioningly following administrative policies.

Mr. Keisling's criticisms of public education might have been more effective had he focused on two major problems:

(1) The incredible legal complexities involving "due process" rights of students, a result of the Supreme Court decision in *Goss* v. *Lopez* that, while ostensibly and laudably protecting pupils against arbitrary punishment, has provided a shield behind which many surly and recalcitrant students feel free to disrupt and intimidate other students and faculty. Many secondary schools have been turned into veritable "blackboard jungles" where fear, extortion, and petty crime run rampant. Administrators and teachers find it all but impossible to impose discipline, and without an orderly learning environment, education is equally impossible. Many parents, fearful for their children's security, opt for private schools where "due process" concerns are not a problem.

(2) In my experience, and that of a number of former teacher friends, poor administration is a greater problem than poor teaching. In theory, administrators are supposed to be the "educational leaders": the individuals who, by their inspiration and example, demonstrate the importance and worth of good teaching and effective education. All too often in America's public school system, the individuals who are promoted to administra-

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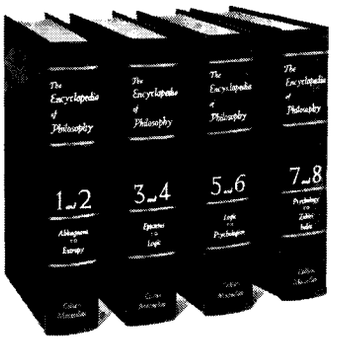

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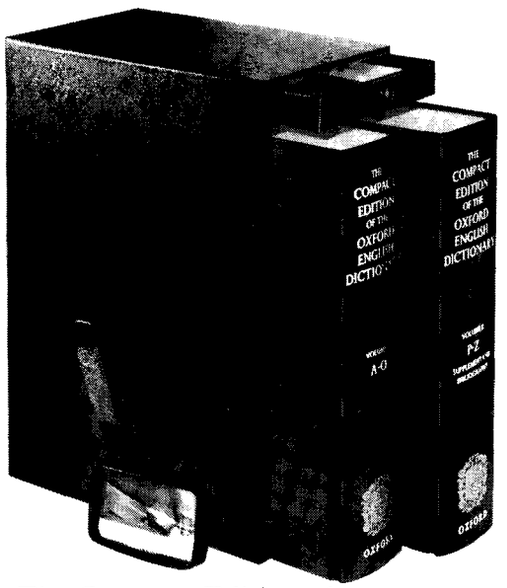

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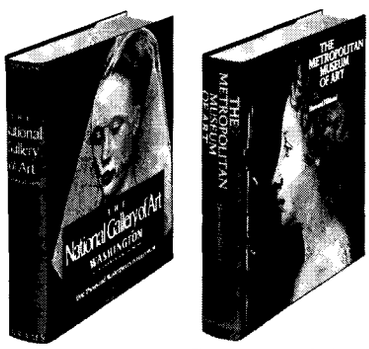

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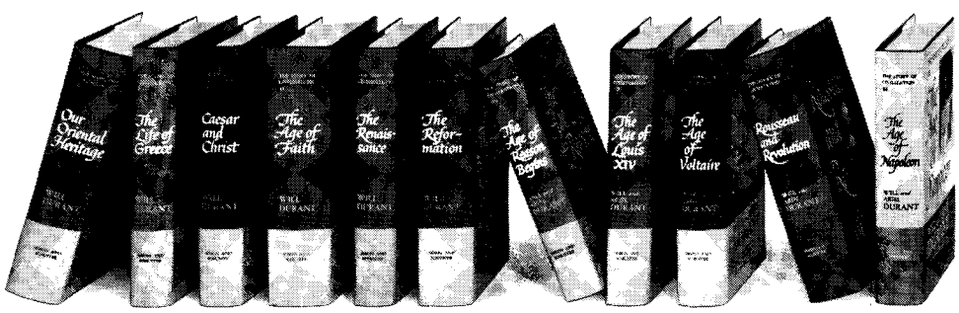

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tion are not the dynamic, imaginative teachers and leaders, but the clones who were appropriately obsequious and supported the right candidates for school board. The mind-set of many of these administrators is superficial, lacks commitment to teaching as an intellectual discipline, and dictates that the way to rise further in one's profession is not to make waves. Indeed, many of these administrators, who gladly fled classroom teaching, treat teaching as a demeaning and unimportant activity.

Merit evaluation of public school administrators, rather than political evaluation, would go a long way to restoring the promise of public education.

PAUL L. NEVINS
Boston, Massachusetts

To the editors:

To blame teachers and teachers' unions for the so-called failure of public schools is to "blame the victim," a technique familiar to women.

Education requires subsidy. As Mr. Keisling noted, at one time women subsidized education by their labor. Other forms of subsidy include endowments, contributions by Catholic charity drives, or public tax money. When the subsidy is direct, as in public tax money, the public demands involvement in the teaching process. I do not lament this involvement, but the professional role must be redefined. Membership in N.E.A. helps me to define that role.

I wonder if Mr. Coleman or Mr. Keisling looked at this dimension of political reality?

ROSEMARY R. HOBSON
Coventry, Rhode Island

To the editors:

Although I am in a union—and glad of it, since my salary and benefits are no longer arbitrary and miserable—I too have serious conflicts of opinion with the powerful N.E.A. I am equally dismayed at the incompetence of some teachers. And, after over five years in "research and development" in educational "laboratories" and state departments, I am angry at over-spending in ill-defined, ego-drenched "soft-money" programs. But after teaching in parochial schools, colleges, and elementary and secondary public schools, I think I know some things Mr. Keisling doesn't.

There has been a tremendous amount of research in the past decade about good schooling, particularly in the troubled city schools that seem to do the worst job. One clear distinction among schools—regardless of curriculum, methods, experience of teachers, etc.—has been the quality of leadership of the administrators. Good schools have principals who know about learning and teaching, and who are actively involved in programs and classrooms. Alas, they are the minority. School administrators tend to be male, with limited teaching experience, and with the smallest portion of their time spent in activity directly related to teaching. Some of this isn't their fault: they are busy checking for head lice, minding the cafeteria, making out budgets and revisions, etc. But the system looks after its good ole boys, letting them escape, with their own ignorance and apathy about teaching, into the softer chair of management. The "lengthy, liberal shibboleth of 'due process'" protects us from the arbitrary whim of those who used to make their choices based on everything *except* competence. Processes in most states do provide for dismissal—but I have seen too many instances where clearly incompetent teachers were not dismissed because their clearly incompetent supervisors failed to tend to business. Most administrators don't know how to hire *or* fire. Until they demonstrate competence themselves, I want protection against their decisions about mine.

There is another factor Mr. Keisling didn't mention: the overcrowded curriculum that distracts students and teachers from the learning of essential skills and knowledge. I'm not referring to art, music, etc. I'm referring to things like bicycle safety, fluoride rinsing, values education, nutrition, sex education, and grammar in the second grade (where ample evidence exists that such teaching is a waste of time). Until we stop trying to solve all the social problems by burdening teachers with parental responsibilities, we *can't* have sound curricula.

SANDRA SCOFIELD
Jacksonville, Oregon

To the editors:

Mr. Keisling says destroy teacher unions and the quality of public schools will increase. Tommyrot! Unions have bettered the profession and the system. I say, set greater qualifications for becoming a teacher, insist that administrators immediately weed out incompetents by direct observation, eliminate social promotion, declare war on parental apathy about absenteeism and low student performance, protect the classroom from constant interruptions, restore teacher disciplinary power, set more requirements and higher standards for students, and reward teachers who are objectively proven to be superior in doing their jobs.

America needs good private and public schools, but it is illiberal to believe that we must destroy teacher unions to accomplish this.

RENNY M. CONNELL
Pasco Comprehensive High School
Dade City, Florida

To the editors:

As an editor of *The Washington Monthly*, Phil Keisling, I'll bet you get into the classrooms of the public schools regularly. Well, I teach "Learning and Behavior Disorders" in a psychiatric hospital, and am the head teacher at the hospital. Phil, I want to extend an invitation to you to visit my school. Come watch me teach, act as a consultant to physicians, liaison between hospital and community, and member of the therapeutic team. I have a few tricks up my sleeve in the classroom as well. Among these gimmicks are behavior management, Fenton's discovery method for teaching history, teacher effectiveness training, prescriptive teaching, transactional analysis, and educational feedback systems. All learned in simplistic education courses, of course. Phil, come watch me teach children who are psychotic from P.C.P., children suffering from alcohol and chemical dependency since the age of 12, car thieves, rapists, burglars, prostitutes, murderers.

I don't want to sound like an apologist for the public schools, but almost all of my students came from public schools and will return to them. Why? Private schools will not put up with these children for even a minute. Take them out of public school, you say—but put them where? We all know the therapeutic value of detention centers and jails. Another problem, Phil: unfortunately, most of our students' parents don't feel education has enough value to lay out a grand. They do lay out incest, abuse, neglect, alcoholism, and parental psychosis, however, and in the regular classrooms parents pass on "status jeans" and "Atari" mentality. Those parents in public schools who have their priorities in order have achieving children.

Behavior disorder youngsters are of course the extreme; I am the last stop. But thousands are discharged yearly all over

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FROM WASHINGTON

What's In A Name

I am heading over to see the new Vietnam War memorial, and pause for a minute to watch the President's helicopter take off from the White House. It is a brilliant cold day with the last of the maples fiery red around the Ellipse. A temporary lath archway just over my head says CHRISTMAS PAGEANT OF PEACE, and there is the place ready for the big national Christmas tree when the time arrives.

There is a rumble—here he comes! I can imagine the cheery warmth inside. Reagan has extricated himself without too much loss of face from his effort to impose sanctions on our allies for selling parts to Russia for the Siberian pipeline. Reporters are not vindictive; we won't rub it in. We have tacitly agreed not to heckle the President too much if he gets his policies mixed up, or his facts wrong, in his affable explanations. He has held fourteen formal White House press conferences in two years. F.D.R. had them twice a week. In London, Margaret Thatcher also holds two question periods a week. Reagan does take five minutes every Saturday to explain things on radio (without questions), and he is off overnight to Louisiana and Florida to explain his policies.

There is a mutter of engines, the big gray-green helicopter whirls over. I am standing right at Zero Milestone: "Starting point of the First Transcontinental Motor Convoy over the Lincoln Highway in VII-JVL-MCMXIX." The sun beats blindingly on the White House and its two piazzas. My, the flagstaff is high; it must be thirty feet.

I walk past the White House down to the Mall and the Vietnam War memorial. It is on hallowed ground—two acres of land near the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. The controversial design follows a controversial war that cost almost fifty-eight thousand lives. The war was a twenty-five year struggle to contain Communism, a war that U.S. Presidents could not afford to lose and were afraid to win. It ended in the final eerie days of spring 1975, when South Vietnam slowly collapsed like a building going down under demolition charges and the last of the besieged Americans lifted off a rooftop in a helicopter.

How do you have a memorial for this sort of thing? Seven million dollars were raised for it and the winning design was that of Maya Yang Lin, a young Yale architecture student. The contestants were instructed only that their entries display the names of the fallen "without political or military content." I think it is one of the most impressive memorials I ever saw.

It is an outdoor affair. As you approach the monument, you come up a walk bent to make a long V, each side of which is two hundred and fifty feet long. The meadow is on one side, and the polished granite slabs on the other. The slabs have names on them; they are sunk into a gentle hill. It is the names that do it. They are not listed by rank or alphabet, but in the order of their deaths. These were eager young men fighting in the jungles. Sometimes they thought they knew what they were doing; often they were confused. Now the names are there—Leland G. Deeds, Imlay S. Swiddeson, Richard M. Seng—but take your eye off the cluster and you can't find the place again. It's just names, people, you and me and our sons. There are no inscriptions to tell you what to think; there are no heroic utterances. It is stark. Each name is a special boy who never came home. It is all left to the observer. The dark, shining slabs of granite are as hard and polished as a mirror, and you can see your image reflected over the names as you lean forward. My eyes moistened. In the crowd we looked at each other, deeply moved.

This austere jumble is extraordinarily

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"A fascinating and persuasive study of Eisenhower's technique of governing."
—David S. Broder

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From recently opened documents, Greenstein draws evidence that Dwight Eisenhower's bland "statesmanlike" exterior was part of a shrewd, deliberate, and enormously effective leadership strategy. His book "should appeal to history buffs interested in what makes Washington tick." *—Wall Street Journal*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 6, 1982

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

A couple of weeks ago, *The Wall Street Journal* carried a long story about the murder of a young New York lawyer. He had been walking with his girlfriend at dusk in a Lower East Side park when he was accosted by three teenagers, beaten with a baseball bat and a tree limb; then stabbed and robbed. Detectives said it was a "random murder." According to one study, this form of killing has become more common since the 1960s: "Murder at the hands of a stranger has increased nearly twice as fast as murder by relatives, friends, and acquaintances." Perhaps the best name for it is Coleridge's gloss on Iago, that enigma of evil: motiveless malignity.

It is fear of motiveless malignity that makes so many of the elderly prisoners in their homes. It is this fear that empties our city streets at nightfall, abandoning them to the mugger and his prey. And it is this fear that keeps crime high on the list of the public's polled anxieties, just behind economic insecurity.

Judging by the statistics, those of us who have been lucky enough to escape being victims of violent crime are a protected species, but everyone has friends who have been raped, robbed, or assaulted. "The chance of being the victim of a violent crime," writes Charles Silberman in *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice*, "nearly tripled between 1960 and 1976; so did the possibility of being the victim of a serious crime, such as burglary, purse snatching, or auto theft." According to the F.B.I.'s Crime Clock, one crime is committed every two seconds, one violent crime every twenty-four seconds, one property crime every three seconds. One American is murdered every twenty-three minutes, one is raped every six minutes, one assaulted every forty-nine seconds, one robbed every five seconds. In this vicious lottery we are all at risk, but not equally: the poor are the likeliest victims of crime, and blacks are murdered at six to eight times the rate of whites, and raped more than twice as often. It used to be safer. In 1951 a New York City police force of over 19,000 was asked to cope with 15,812 violent crimes, less than one per officer. By 1981 a police force of 22,000 was faced with 157,026 such crimes—seven for every officer—and as few as five robberies in a hundred were followed by an arrest. New York is an extreme case, but this process of "unilateral disarmament," as one researcher calls it, has not been confined to New York.

What is to be done? One answer is to "privatize" safety, either by buying a gun or by hiring a private guard. The first choice is a counsel of panic, understandable in the circumstances but tragically shortsighted. Most of the guns young thugs use against us are in fact our own: 210,000 guns are reported stolen from private residences each year and sold, quick as fear, to the terrorists in our midst.

The other option, to hire a gun, is predicted to become more popular in the 1980s, and firms specializing in security are enjoying a boom even in the current recession. Along with specialized health care and quality education, safety is rapidly becoming a "positional good," something that one citizen has more access to than another. Already there are twice as many private guards as sworn police officers, an ominous trend. Safety is the heart of the social contract and a precondition of our political community. To make citizens responsible for guaranteeing their own safety is to break

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that contract and abolish that community.

There is another way. Surveying the problem of violent crime at the end of the 1960s, Richard Hofstadter wondered at "the political negligence" that for so long had kept violence off the public agenda. On November 2 voters across the country sent the politicians a message that might end that negligence. Wherever they had a chance to vote on crime-related issues, they demanded that the first good of civil society—physical safety—be restored to them.

Massachusetts voters chose to reinstate the death penalty. Colorado voted 4 to 1 to refuse bail to any defendant suspected of capital crimes. Arizona passed a measure that would deny bail to any defendant "found to pose a danger to society." Florida voters want the police to have more "latitude" in conducting searches. Virginians defeated an amendment that would have allowed their legislature to restore the civil rights to convicted felons. In New Jersey a $170-million bond issue to build more prisons passed overwhelmingly. Meanwhile, in California a tough gun control law was massively defeated, and even leaders of the gun control lobby concede that this vote was motivated by fear of crime, one whipped up by a $10 million ad campaign by the National Rifle Association—an organization, in Hofstadter's words, "as powerful as it is indifferent to public safety." Plainly, the public mood is to be tough on crime.

WE THINK Congress should respond to this mood in less despairing ways. It should respond just as it has to the public's concern about unemployment: with a jobs bill. We are pleased that both House Democrats and Senate Republicans are following the course we advocated last spring ("The Forgotten Demand Side," TNR, April 21), by pushing for public works spending on our decaying infrastructure to put some of the unemployed back to work. With Martin Feldstein and his predecessor, Murray Weidenbaum, both saying that the recession has not yet hit bottom, and predicting that slow growth through 1983 will keep unemployment at or slightly below its current rate of 10.4 percent, we want a public works bill to clear the Congress, if possible in this lame duck session. On the other hand, with blue-collar unemployment running close to 20 percent, and with an estimated 50,000 Americans each month leaving the Midwest for the cities of the Sun Belt in an exodus of despair, we are disappointed that the size of the projected deficits must limit the scope of a jobs bill. Timing is also a problem. Public works spending is slow in starting, and it is also capital-intensive: it takes roughly $1 billion to create 25,000 to 40,000 jobs. More Americans could be put to work faster and cheaper as police auxiliaries, shoring not bridges, but civilization.

In line with the new federalism, money should be sent to the states to create thousands of police auxiliaries, which is not to say full police officers. Officers are too expensive and take too long to train. But eight to ten auxiliaries can be put to work for the price of five policemen, and trained far more quickly. Consider the model of Santa Ana, a city of 250,000 in Orange County, California. Several years ago, threatened by the budget ax of Proposition 13, Santa Ana began an experiment with police auxiliaries. After a two-week training period, the auxiliaries, many of whom belonged to the city's Hispanic minority, were used to perform the routine tasks of policing, to work on crime prevention in the neighborhoods, and in general to free up the police, allowing them to spend more time on the streets. (Police officers spend an estimated 85 percent of their time on work that could be done by paraprofessionals—processing suspects, administering crime prevention programs, and patrolling, for example, and only 15 percent fighting crime.) The program, part of a community-wide effort to combat increasing crime, has been an exemplary success. Crime is down (it dropped 19 percent the first year the auxiliaries were on the job); equally important, the fear of crime has abated. There has been virtually no attrition among the auxiliaries, although the work is hard and occasionally dangerous, and the pay only a third to a half that of the police officers (whose ranks the best of them will join as jobs open up). The merchants of Santa Ana are making more money, now that foot patrolmen are back on the streets. Best of all, the city's large elderly population, which once feared to visit its dangerous downtown, can now shop and visit with markedly less fear. To make it possible for citizens to exercise their liberty without fear is a political achievement of the highest order.

This achievement is one that can, and must, be duplicated. Diana Trilling has observed that our society lacks a superego: using police auxiliaries simply to maintain order in our streets, subways, and parks would be a way to reconstitute the social superego over the behavior of the small population of high-risk youth that commits the street crime. In uniform, equipped with walkie-talkies, the auxiliaries would bring a sense of safety everywhere they went, while offering ghetto youth a sight they too rarely see: a gainfully employed adult. Santa Ana's Community Oriented Policing shows the way; it offers proof of Robert K. Merton's dictum, "Whatever is, is possible."

POLICE AUXILIARIES are a way to put people to work right now. But more must be done to make America safer. We understand why outraged voters want to attack crime by increasing its punishment. Tougher sentencing has a primitive moral appeal; but it is the certainty of punishment, far more than the severity of it, that deters crime. Prison sentences in the United States are already among the longest in the democratic world. To add to them still further would probably be counterproductive. With some exceptions, juries are more reluctant to convict when sentences are harsher; and if our prisons, already full to bursting, are packed still further by inmates serving indiscriminately longer

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sentences, prosecutors and judges will be even more tempted than they are now to agree to plea-bargaining that lets violent criminals back on the streets. Punishment, in any event, is lamentably after the fact. Deterring crime requires catching criminals, or, better still, creating an atmosphere of order in which crime is not so likely to occur—and that will require more, and better qualified, policemen.

More police will cost money; but it is the only way to raise the young muggers' perceived risk of apprehension, without which the threat of punishment is nugatory. An imaginative scheme for limiting police costs while increasing coverage has recently been proposed by a panel of New York law enforcement experts headed by Adam Walinsky, the former chairman of the State Investigations Committee. The plan is called the Police Corps, and the panel claims it could add 30,000 policemen to New York State rolls within six to eight years. As in the R.O.T.C., volunteers would be awarded college scholarships—up to $8,000 per year, to attract students in private as well as public colleges—in exchange for which they would agree to serve as policemen for three years upon graduation. Recruits would be free to take any major in college but would have to spend their summer vacations in police training. They would work for the police force nearest their homes, but be paid—at a third the rate of New York City policemen—through the state. Some would decide to make law enforcement a career, leavening the police departments with able people; some would serve three years, then take another job, saving the benefits and pension costs that nearly bankrupted New York City. The police unions are uneasy about the Police Corps, fearing it might create a two-track police force; and veteran policemen have criticized the idea, saying it takes more than three years to learn their demanding trade. So there are problems. But if New York State decides to adopt the idea, it will be an experiment worth watching. If it worked in New York, the federal government could get behind the Police Corps, by offering matching grants to states seeking to adopt it.

THE POLICE CORPS is an idea for tomorrow; the police auxiliaries are for today. They could be funded by capping, scaling back, or eliminating altogether next year's tax cut; and by eliminating a legislative outrage, the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, under which over $1 billion in federal tax revenue has been funneled to N.R.A.-sponsored activities, like hunter-safety programs and target ranges, in the states. The money has come from the 10 percent excise tax the government levies on the sale of guns and ammunition, and from the ludicrously low $10 license fee it charges gun dealers each year. The tax, which will bring in $30 million next year, should be raised to 50 percent or 75 percent, and the license fee set at $1,000. This would have two good effects: at least a few people would be discouraged from buying handguns, and those who did would be obliged to contribute to the nation's safety. As for Pittman-Robertson, it should be held up to public ridicule, repealed, and replaced with a statute mandating that revenue from the sale of handguns go to programs like the police auxiliaries and the Police Corps.

The long-term answer to much violent street crime is jobs, and the family and community stability they bring. Criminologists speak of advancing high-risk youth along a learning curve from street crime to secondary labor market jobs to the greater security of the primary labor market. The ideal is to move them along this continuum as fast as possible. But today, with primary labor market jobs in manufacturing being exported to the third world at a rapid rate, with secondary labor market jobs, like working at McDonald's, clogged by young people who can't move up to the primary labor market, and with public sector CETA jobs eliminated, few youths will complete this learning curve; instead, they may well adopt street crime as a profession. We are dealing with desperate, angry, unsocialized young people; and until the schools and the economy provide them with adequate training and opportunity, we must be protected from them. The willingness to invest tax money in public safety is not yet a political issue, but last month's election may portend that it will be an issue in 1984. For the sake of the most vulnerable people in our society, we hope so.

NOTEBOOK

□ CIRCULAR REASONING DEPARTMENT: "He [sociologist William H. Whyte] said tracking studies show that although people claim not to like Lexington Avenue because of its congestion, they tend to walk on the more crowded of its two sidewalks." (From "The Talk of the Town," *The New Yorker*, October 25.) Or as Yogi Berra put it, "No one goes to that restaurant anymore. It's too crowded."

□ SEVEN YEARS AFTER FRANCO, the Spanish right has been crushed in a free election, and *The Nation* has a complaint. "Felipe González," writes Christopher Hitchens from Madrid, "is no socialist." "Socialism was not a word for which the new leader found any room in his speech on election night," Mr Hitchens writes; "The red dawn, if ever, will be on another agenda for another election." Is this the perfectionism of the idealist or of the party man? It is certainly a moral and intellectual impertinence. The Spanish struggle to overcome Fascism is measured against *The Nation*'s little idea of Socialism, when it should be measured against the real conditions in the country, against all that the Spaniards suffered to reach freedom. Mr. Hitchens, however, scorns such a standard. "There will always be reasons,

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in a country haunted by the possibility of a resurgent fascist coup, to appeal for unity in the face of the enemy." There will be indeed. And "the enemy" of democracy, we would have thought, is *The Nation*'s enemy, too. But no, it has in mind something a bit more specific: economic and social structures, a third way, and so on. Until the "red dawn," the people of Spain have only its grudging support. This is precisely the kind of ideological greed, the indifference to miracles that don't fit the mold, that makes this corner of the left irrelevant to the political struggles of the times.

□ WE THOUGHT WE HAD given our readers a full analysis of the war in Lebanon, but we were wrong. We missed a story. "Beirut Cinemas Turn Corner As Biz Normalizes," says the headline in *Variety*. It seems that eight years of battle had brought "exhib activity" almost to a standstill. What's worse, "because the people were afraid to leave their homes at night, the pirate cassette trade flourished and got out of control, with no central government to counteract it." Or, as Sam Goldwyn said, if people aren't gonna go see a picture, there's nothing you can do to stop them. Anyway, exit the PLO and enter a central government. Business is booming, particularly in sea-side Juniyeh, where Christians in bikinis spent the hot summer. The most popular movie in town is *Stripes*, which has broken all records. "I guess the Lebanese want to see arms and armies only in a comedy context," said Beirut's "leading exhib." Not all the Lebanese, to be sure; the people in West Beirut aren't laughing.

□ BRILLIANT INSIGHT DEPARTMENT: "Kennedy's task will be either to achieve an early knockout in the first primaries and caucuses—forcing out other contenders—or to go into the convention as the clear leader. Either way, Kennedy will have to beat Mondale and all other contenders sooner or later." (*Newsweek*, November 8.)

□ THIRTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "In these trials [of Jewish Communists in Czechoslovakia], which follow the standard operating procedure of the Soviet purges in every other respect, anti-Semitism breaks the surface as a new force in Communism. The procedure has always been to destroy individuals, organizations and ideas by identifying them with treachery. Now Zionism joins sabotage wrecking and espionage as an anti-Communist crime. . . . In making our own calculations of profit and loss, the U.S. must avoid what may be a Soviet trap—to exacerbate relations between the Arab States and Israel. But if the losses of anti-Semitism cannot be increased, its profits beyond the Communist borders can be reduced. The way is to attack all latent anti-Semitism at its source. Perhaps the most hopeful counter action is the resolution introduced in the United Nations by many members and now endorsed by the Israeli spokesman, which calls on the Arab nations and Israel to join in conference until they find a basis for peace." (Editorial, December 8, 1952.)

The consumer's nightmare.

CHAOS BY THE CAPSULE

AMERICANS have a knack for trend-spotting. Picking up on the Chicago Tylenol murders, many saw a chance for instant, if anonymous, fame. They simply took a bottle or package from a drugstore or supermarket shelf, infected it with kerosene or toilet cleaner, put it back, and waited for the hysteria to set in. Better yet, some pretended to have been poisoned themselves. Since the beginning of October, the F.D.A. has reported almost two hundred contamination incidents, real and faked, involving products from Peggy Lawton Fudge Brownies to cinnamon-flavored Lavoris mouthwash. Until now, most food and drugs have been defenseless against such tampering. It has been so easy.

And scary. The Tylenol poisonings and the "copycat" incidents that have followed demonstrate how easily one of the most basic assumptions of consumer society—the presumed authority of the product—can be undermined. Good capitalists, we have taken the division of labor to its logical extreme. Most Americans depend on others for nearly everything they consume. They cannot satisfy even a small part of their needs with the work of their own hands. And most rely, in turn, on the needs of others as the source of their own livelihoods. The groceries we buy enable others to buy theirs. If the consumer loses faith, however, and does not trust a product's label, then it's no sale. If records were randomly sorted into dust jackets, so that a Beethoven cover might contain something by Charlie Parker or the Rolling Stones, only the most indisciminate music-lover would continue to buy. If one in every hundred milk cartons contained milk laced with insecticide, people would go elsewhere for calcium. The dairy and recording industries would collapse. Similar product adulteration, on a broad enough scale, could cripple our entire goods economy. The Tylenol affair has reminded us that the products we use so regularly are not facts of nature, but are man-made and subject to the whims of the kooks in our midst.

Everyone realizes this, at least subconsciously. The consumer society has been badly shaken—witness the amount of media attention devoted to the scare. People have stopped buying pain relievers in capsules. They think twice about the need for nasal spray and eye drops. Halloween candy is brought to local hospitals for X-rays. The mere hint of poisoning has prompted mass hysteria: two hundred people at a high school football game start vomiting from apparently uncontaminated soda; a woman with a bad case of the flu thinks she has been poisoned by some Excedrin. We suddenly begin to scrutinize a product's container, wondering if it holds what it says it does and not some anonymous death, an unglorified Russian roulette.

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Producers have also panicked. Millions of dollars' worth of merchandise has been cleared from store shelves and destroyed, even though only a tiny percentage is contaminated. Johnson & Johnson alone has disposed of 31 million bottles of its Tylenol products, of which perhaps a few dozen had been tampered with, and several other products have been recalled on a local basis. Manufacturers tremble at the suggestion that their wares may be tainted, moving quickly to ensure that their good name does not become the butt of black humor. In Ohio, $100,000 worth of dairy products was destroyed after the Lawson Milk Company received four unsubstantiated reports of poisoned items. Tons of Ball Park hot dogs were snatched from supermarkets after razor blades and nails were said to have been discovered in several packages. It turned out to be a well-planned hoax. Before the Tylenol affair, the idea of food and drug packagers collectively demanding increased government regulation was about as likely as Detroit begging for air-bag requirements. But the Proprietary Association, the trade group of nonprescription drug manufacturers, has now requested and received stricter F.D.A. packaging laws, which will cost the industry an estimated $6 billion a year. (This comes from an organization that resisted child-proof capping for over-the-counter and prescription drugs.) Food producers are following suit on their own.

The present spate of poisoning incidents is dying down, especially as would-be perpetrators recognize the diminishing attention with which each ensuing crime is received. The crisis has not changed the way Americans live—we are not raising hens in our backyards or resorting to home-made cold remedies. We cannot return to earlier economic structures, or to more primitive forms of life. We can make it more difficult for psychopaths to realize their fantasies by demanding stricter government packaging regulations and by examining our purchases with more care. But despite these precautions, we will always be acting on a measure of faith. The recent episodes—the hoaxes as much as the crimes—attack a fundamental coherence in our capitalist lives.

There was good reason for the recent fear. It was the fear that the consumerist center would not hold. What if some disgruntled employee or, worse, a conspiratorial cabal attacked at the factory level? What if such incidents were magnified ten or a hundred times in scale, to the point that we couldn't trust the water we drink or the meat we eat? "Either we would head for the streets bearing clubs and torches, like the villagers in Frankenstein movies," writes *Time*'s Roger Rosenblatt, "or we would bolt the doors like Howard Hughes, letting our fingernails grow toward heaven in prayers for germ-proof sterility." But it is not so much Frankenstein that comes to mind as *The Twilight Zone*. The revolt of the product is the ultimate nightmare for a society like ours.

PETER SPIRO

Three easy steps to an unsafe workplace.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD

When the Manville Corporation, a major asbestos manufacturer, filed for bankruptcy in August, it was an ironic reminder of the soundness of worker health and safety regulations. Had Manville taken precautions a generation ago, when the perils of asbestosis began to become evident, thousands of workers might have avoided illness and death, Manville might have avoided the lawsuits that drove it to bankruptcy. It's too late for that now, but it's not too late to do something about brown lung disease in the cotton industry, about stomach, lung, and liver cancer in the chemical industry, and about many other threats to life and limb in the workplace.

Twelve years ago, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration was established to protect Americans from dangers in the workplace, and to ensure that companies like Manville save their employees, and themselves, from the exorbitant costs of neglecting worker safety. Today, although industrial injuries around the nation have declined by 13 percent, and in small businesses by as much as 26 percent, OSHA still has a good bit of industrial housekeeping to do. Unfortunately, the Reagan Administration seems to think it is OSHA that is hazardous to our health.

OSHA's director, Thorne Auchter, a 37-year-old former Florida construction executive, has applied formidable political skill to the task of what he calls "lifting unnecessary federal burdens off the American people." He sees worker health and safety standards, by law his prime concern, mostly as a bane to business. Under his leadership, the agency's prime concern has been finding ways to avoid doing its job.

Mr. Auchter has developed three major programs to excuse industries from compliance with OSHA regulations. His "Exemption Plan," scheduled to go into effect next January, would waive the requirement that so-called low-hazard industries keep health and safety records. Retail trade, insurance, and real estate companies, and businesses involved in educational, legal, and social services would all be exempted under this rule. Mr. Auchter's "Targeting" program would reduce routine safety inspections at many of the more hazardous installations, including automobile assembly plants, textile mills, munitions factories, and steel mills. No inspection would be required if a firm's log showed lost workday rate below the national average. The fate of worker protection would rest on the honesty and accuracy of the employer's record-keeping. The "Targeting" program, however, makes no provision for improving or checking such records. (Indeed, the Office of Management and Budget wants OSHA to eliminate the requirement that industry keep logs.) Moreover, a factory could meet the program's single standard and still be a dangerous place to

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work. Workers could be injured or even killed at a given site, but if the absentee rate were below the national average that year, there would be no inspection.

Mr. Auchter calls his third pilot program, his favorite, "Voluntary Compliance." In order to develop a "less adversarial" relationship with industry, he intends to replace many routine on-site inspections with voluntary compliance agreements. Employers and unions would agree on health and safety standards, and unions would notify the agency in the event of any violation, thus obviating the need for routine inspections. Mr. Auchter's enthusiasm for this idea burst forth in a series of upbeat acronyms: PRIME (Positive Results through Intensive Management Efforts), PEP (Programs for Employee Participation), and Project Build. He has since settled upon STAR (Sharing The Accountability for Regulation), PRAISE (Positive Results Achieved In Safe Employment), and Operation Try.

Obviously, any program based on the participation of unions requires their approval. Mr. Auchter claims that the reaction of organized labor has been "extremely favorable." This is simply untrue. Voluntary Compliance programs, commonly known as joint labor-management committees, already exist in many areas of the country, and labor does not object to them where enough workers are well enough organized to ensure that they can operate effectively. But, as Mr. Auchter might have discovered had his consultations ranged beyond a select group of pro-Reagan union officials, the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and many other unions are deeply disturbed by his plan, which they learned about from a press release. Because these unions do not possess large staffs with the technical expertise of OSHA's inspection corps, they are worried about a plan that would transfer the responsibility (and the costs) of enforcing the law from the government to unions and, ultimately, to individual workers, since it is they who would have to initiate any complaint. (The Auchter plan includes no safeguards to protect complaining workers from disciplinary action by their employers.) To substitute, rather than supplement, OSHA's enforcement activities with this program offers many businesses a way to evade compliance, and negates the agency's preventive function besides. What Mr. Auchter's projects disregard is that OSHA was created precisely because "voluntary compliance" had proved to be an oxymoron.

Mr. Auchter's casual approach to his duties is typified by his efforts to weaken the Cotton Dust Standard, which is aimed at a problem that affects about a quarter of the work force in textile mills, causing emphysema and chronic bronchitis. When the Occupational Health and Safety Act was being debated in Congress, Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas said:

> Is it too expensive for the widow trying to raise her child or manage an allowance under worker's compensation and social security? And what about the man, a good hardworking man, tied to a wheelchair or relegated to a bed for the rest of his life? That is what we are dealing with when we talk about industrial safety. We are talking about peoples' lives, not the indifference of some accountants.

Last year the Supreme Court, quoting this passage, repudiated the textile industry's opposition to the rule, opposition based on the industry's own cost-benefit analysis. Congress "viewed the cost of health and safety as a cost of doing business," Justice Brennan reminded the textile firms. And, in fact, businesses farsighted enough to look beyond their quarterly profit reports are discovering that modernizing their plants results in higher long-term productivity. The replacement of old, outmoded equipment with new, sophisticated machines, complete with ventilating devices and engineering controls, has increased the efficiency of many plants around the country that have already complied with the standard.

NONE OF THIS has deterred Mr. Auchter. Internal OSHA memoranda, in blithe disregard of court rulings and acts of Congress, say that the "traditional labor market" should henceforth be relied upon to protect workers, while OSHA should be concerned with "monetizing wherever possible" and paying careful attention to "cost implementation." OSHA is considering substituting for plant renovations inexpensive—and sometimes ineffective—respirators, safety helmets, goggles, and other personal equipment. Workers are to continue to wear bulky and uncomfortable devices that often don't fit properly and can easily malfunction. (After donning a protective face mask, Senator Herman Talmadge, an opponent of the standard, remarked: "I do not know how good a job it does in keeping out cotton dust. I do know it does a pretty good job of keeping out air.") Mr. Auchter also claims that "new data on health risks posed by cotton dust" justifies a review of the standard. The principle source of the "new data" is a predictably biased study commissioned by the American Textile Manufacturers Institute, which uses methods already discredited in court decisions and Congressional hearings. No one has yet shown that the dangers posed by cotton dust have diminished.

Mr. Auchter and his allies in industry protest that all they want to do is to bring some form of cost-benefit analysis to worker health and safety regulation—to take regulation out of the realm of subjectivity and impose upon it the discipline of disinterested scientific truth. It's a specious argument. All regulation—indeed, all decision-making—can be seen as based upon calculations of relative costs and benefits. But neither costs nor benefits can be judged independently of moral or social values. Congress passed the Occupational Health and Safety Act not because it was working from a set of figures different from Mr. Auchter's, but because it was working from a different set of values.

DAVID SEIDEMAN

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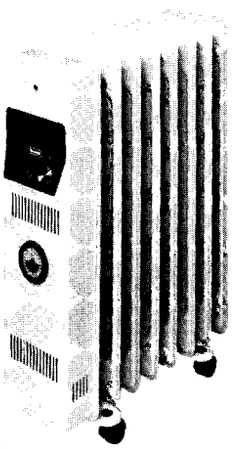
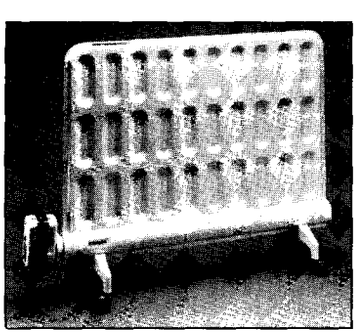
TOOLS FOR LIVING™

Staying ahead of the winter heating game doesn't necessarily mean you have to give in to discomfort or ridiculous layers of clothing. The key is efficiency. Here are five products designed to make your home more energy efficient and they should save you a few dollars in the process. For starters we recommend *Stop Burning Your Money: The Intelligent Homeowner's Guide to Household Energy Savings* by John Rothchild. This book in itself is one of the most cost-effective energy investments you can make. **$15.50** ($3.00) #A509.

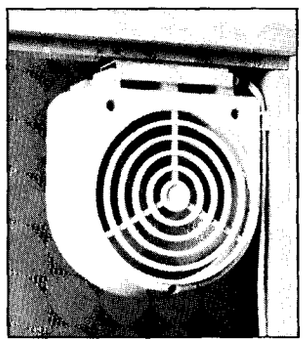
Heat Where You Need It



We've tried many different space heaters in search of the best combination of safety, economy and heating efficiency. The two portable oil-filled radiators presented here won our favor for many reasons, especially safety. There are no exposed flames, they do not get overly hot (making them suitable even for a child's room), and they emit no fumes or odors. They are filled with a special oil that heats up quickly, cools down slowly and never needs replacing. Both styles have easy roll wheels for room-to-room portability and a built-in thermostat that responds to changing room temperatures. When functioning as a supplement to your central heating system these European-made heaters can make your home more comfortable and much more energy efficient. The **DeLonghi** heater, shown above, has a feature not common to most space heaters—*an automatic timer. You can program it to go on and off in 15 minute intervals day or night.* For example, set it to go off a few minutes before you wake in the morning so your bathroom or bedroom has started to warm before you get up! This unit has three heat settings (600w, 900w, 1,500w) and provides a maximum of 5,100 BTUs. The DeLonghi comes in a neutral oyster color, weighs 38 lbs and is UL listed. This model with automatic timer is *not generally available in retail stores* and costs **$150.00** ($12.95) #A485. An identical model without the timer costs **$140.00** ($12.95) #A487. The **Dimplex** panel radiator, shown on left, offers an unusual, yet attractive contemporary design. The large heating surface of the panel provides an ideal balance of half radiant and half convected heat—no energy is wasted. The unit draws a maximum of 750 watts and produces 2559 BTUs. It's 31½" long x 23½" high and comes in two colors: bronze #A563 or white #A562. The Dimplex radiators cost **$150.00** ($12.95) each.

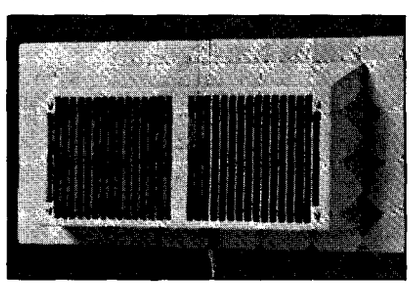


Fan For All Seasons



Have you ever noticed how one room can be chilly while the very next room tends to be warm? You don't have to put up with such discomfort once you've installed the Con-Serv room-to-room temperature balancing fan. This little fan mounts high in the frame of a doorway (it tucks unobtrusively on the outer side so the door can be closed) and directs and balances the air flow. Since warm air tends to rise to the ceiling, it makes good sense to have a fan up there. And since it's reversible you can use it all year-round . . . recirculating the warm air down into the room during the winter months, moving cool air-conditioned air more efficiently in summertime. It can actually help save quite a few dollars on the costs of heating and cooling as you stay comfortable without having to adjust the thermostat. The Con-Serv temperature balancing fan has a 110-volt motor with a 10-foot cord and an in-line switch. It's quite easy to mount and comes with a mounting bracket, screws, clips and complete instructions. It weighs a mere 2 lb. 3 oz. and measures 5½" x 5" x 3½". **$28.00** ($3.95) #A397.

Register Fan And Sealers



Every hot air heating system has at least one or two. Cold spots, that is—places that for some reason never quite get up to temperature. Often it is the rooms furthest from the furnace, an unusually large room, or rooms in a later addition. This booster fan (actually it is two small 4" fans running together) fits right in the register outlet, sucks heat up the duct and pushes it out into the room. A heat sensor in the switch turns the fan on automatically as the heat comes up (there is also a manual control, which means you can use it in the summer to move the cool air off the floor and up into the room). The fan fits all registers up to 6"x14" and plugs into any electrical outlet. It comes with 9' of cord. The register fans cost **$40.00** ($3.95) #A536.

Magnetic Register Sealers prevent loss of warm or cool air through unused outlets. Sealer kits require a ruler and scissors to install initially, after that they can be removed or replaced in a moment. Material for three 6"x14" register covers costs **$12.00** ($1.95) #A539.

*ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUARANTEE: We ship via United Parcel Service wherever possible to insure prompt delivery. The price of each item is shown followed by its shipping and handling charges in ( ). Be sure to add the price **plus** shipping and handling charges for each item ordered to arrive at the **total price** of each item. If you are not satisfied for any reason, return the article to us within 30 days, and we'll exchange it or refund the cost, per your instructions.*

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What Andropov can and can't do to change Russia.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

BY ADAM B. ULAM

"I MUST NOT die now. It would be the greatest mistake I ever made," the first Lord Rothschild was reputed to have observed when, following the outbreak of World War I, British inheritance and income taxes were substantially increased. Similar sentiments must have agitated Leonid Brezhnev during his last months. His longtime closest friend and collaborator, Konstantin Chernenko, was being challenged for the role of heir apparent, and several members of the ruling oligarchy evidently decided that their ailing chief should not be allowed to appoint his successor. It was a clear indication that Brezhnev's grip on the main instruments of power was becoming shaky when, after the death of Mikhail Suslov early in 1982, his place on the Central Committee Secretariat was filled by Yuri Andropov—who, in view of his longstanding membership in the Politburo (since 1973) and his relative youth (67 years old then, 68 now), immediately became a contender for its highest post.

Two years ago, after the resignation of Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin, Brezhnev still had the clout to guarantee that the new occupant of the post, traditionally the second most important in the Soviet Union, would not be a contender for the top job. He did this by the simple expedient of arranging the appointment of the 75-year-old Nikolai Pikhonov, a relatively marginal figure. And so toward the end there were just four oligarchs in the running, those who combined full membership in the Politburo with a Party secretaryship. Of the four, Andrei Kirilenko was older than Brezhnev and even more ill, and Mikhail Gorbachev's extreme youth—he is 51—was bound to make him unacceptable to his septuagenarian colleagues. Quite possibly Brezhnev contemplated, just before his demise, some maneuvers and personnel changes that would have offset the influence of Andropov and strengthened that of Chernenko. But before any such schemes could be put into operation, Brezhnev died, and the Politburo hastened to choose Andropov over his rival.

Brezhnev had other reasons to cling desperately to his post, despite his increasingly obvious physical infirmity. Change of leadership in the Soviet Union, no matter how smooth the process of transition appears to be, is bound to send tremors throughout the entire structure of the Party and society. Political power in the Soviet system is exercised in a conspiratorial as well as an authoritarian manner. Normally, some twenty-odd people—full and alternate members of the Politburo, plus perhaps a few of the highest military officials—are the only ones who know what the regime's real goals and fears are, how it actually views the dangers of a nuclear war, the current state of the Soviet economy, the country's future relations with China and the United States, and so on.

The secrecy of the decision-making process, which gives the impression of unanimity and self-assurance on the part of the rulers, is rightly prized by the regime as one of its strongest assets in dealing with foreign and domestic problems. In foreign affairs, it keeps the Soviet Union's rivals from clearly discerning what is bluff and what is seriously meant by those ritualistic threats the Kremlin is prone to issue in just about any international crisis: "The gravest possible consequences will follow unless. . . ." In domestic politics, the aura of awe and iron resolve surrounding the Soviet Olympus inhibits such groups as the military or the industrial managers from developing any idea of challenging the Party's domination, and contributes to the average citizen's feeling that it is not only dangerous but useless to voice his grievances or indulge in fantasies about alternative political systems.

Any change in the Soviet Union's top leadership is bound to affect this picture. The curtain of secrecy surrounding the Kremlin is, if only momentarily and slightly, lifted. The world sees that behind that curtain are not demigods, but quite ordinary politicians, fearful of each other, of their own people, and of what might happen in the outside world. The rhetoric of the new leaders bespeaks such fears. They protest too much: let no one think that the terrible loss suffered by the Soviet people can affect their unity and loyalty, or swerve the government and the Party from the path laid down by Lenin; let our foreign ill-wishers rest under no

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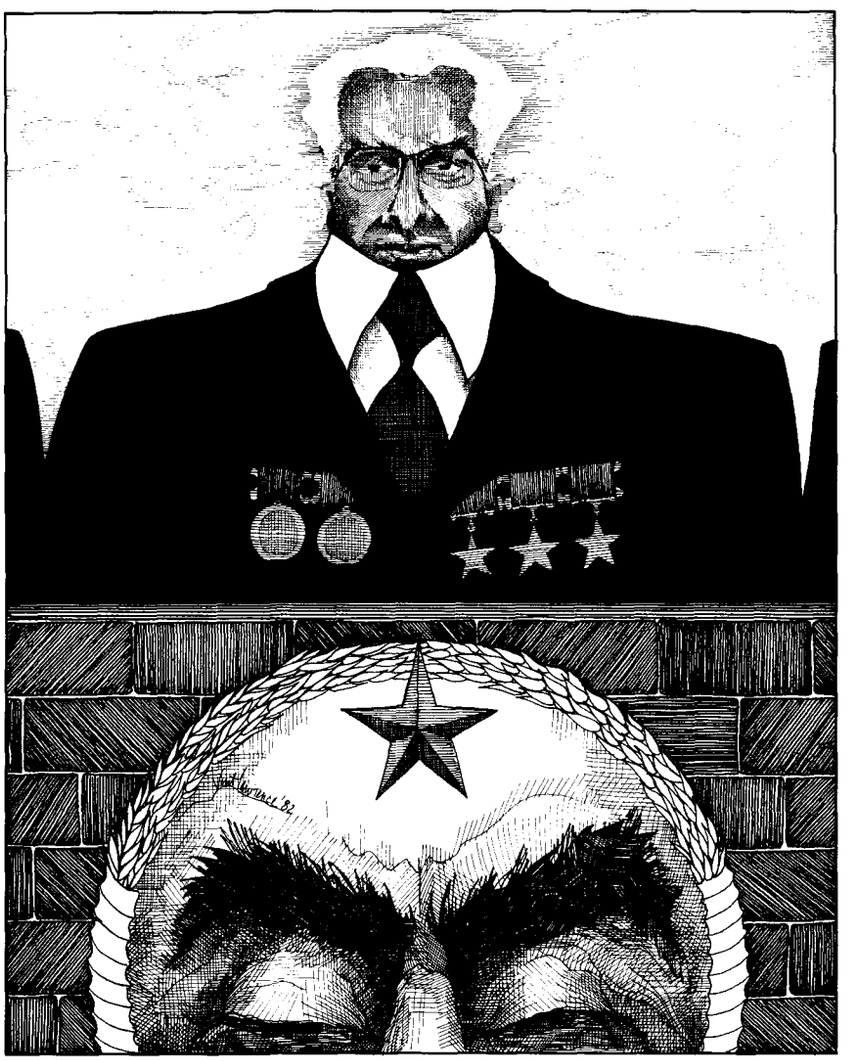
illusion that our loss has made us any less resolute or capable of defending the honor and interests of the Soviet Union, as well as those of socialism and national liberation, etc., etc.

For all such reassurances, the disappearance of the leader, the man built up for years by official propaganda into a paragon of political wisdom and iron determination, has made the ruling group as a whole feel less secure and more nervous. To be sure, with Soviet politics now on a more orderly course, Brezhnev's death, unlike Stalin's, did not throw the ruling elite into a veritable panic. A student of Party history, however, could not miss some unconventional features attending the enthronement of Andropov as General Secretary. According to custom, the meeting of the Central Committee to approve formally the decision of the Politburo should have been open, and it should have been presided over by someone other than the nominee—normally by the senior man with the title of Party secretary. Yet it was Andropov himself who unabashedly took the chair. And it was the defeated rival, Chernenko, who placed Andropov's name in nomination. After describing Andropov—with perhaps conscious irony—as Brezhnev's "closest associate," Chernenko stressed that from now on it will be especially important that the leadership be exercised collectively. Well, such assurances have been given by each successive leader, starting with Stalin. Yet experience has shown that these assurances have usually run against what might be called the logic of the Soviet system. Those who could not impose their domination over the Politburo, like Georgi Malenkov (or Khrushchev during his last two years in power) bit the dust. But by 1970 Brezhnev had managed to elbow aside his Politburo rivals and to start quite a "personality cult" of his own.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The somewhat unusual procedure that was followed in the election of Andropov forcibly suggests that the Politburo intended to convey two messages to the Central Committee and the Soviet establishment in general. First, the Politburo was saying that this time leadership will in fact remain collective in character, with the new incumbent prevented from building up his personal power in the way Brezhnev managed to do (a point strengthened by the fact that Andropov is eleven years older than Brezhnev was when he assumed the office of the General Secretary). And second, by stressing *its* collective rule insofar as decision-making was concerned, the Politburo seemed to convey a warning that it would not tolerate a repetition of the situation that had arisen occasionally under Khrushchev, when the Central Committee as a whole was called upon to resolve a conflict within the top elite. In brief, the oligarchs do not propose to acquiesce to a personal dictatorship or anything close to it, nor to permit those scandalous practices of 1956-1964, when hundreds of Central Committee members—and, toward the end, even some outsiders—became privy to the inner workings of the Party and state apparatus.

Whether and to what extent these desiderata of the current leaders will prevail is another matter. Given his age, Andropov cannot afford to move slowly if he wants to establish clear authority over the Party and the government rather than simply remain first among equals. But it is only the first phase of succession that has ended. There are at least three vacancies to be filled on the Politburo, and one on the Secretariat.

A clue to Andropov's disposition and skill in political

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infighting will come with the filling of Brezhnev's other job, that of the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (i.e., head of state), a position which by itself is mostly ceremonial in nature, but which is of some political importance when held by a top Party leader. In 1967 Brezhnev succeeded in removing Nikolai Podgorny, a potential rival, from the Central Committee Secretariat by foisting the Presidency on him. Will Andropov try the same maneuver vis-à-vis Chernenko? Will the General Secretary attempt to solidify his position by something that undoubtedly would be very popular with broader Party circles if not with his present colleagues: a kind of youth movement, bringing into the Politburo, the Secretariat, and the Council of Ministers some youngsters in their 50s or even their 40s? We probably will not see or hear of such maneuverings for some time, but they may already be going on. It is only when new appointments and resignations are announced that we shall be able to gauge the strength of the new General Secretary's position.

What of the man himself? The veil of secrecy covers not only the operations of the Politburo as a whole, but also the political personality of its members—until they reach the summit. Who in the 1930s or 1940s would have envisioned Nikita Khrushchev, then a faithful executor of Stalin's policies, as a future reformer and a man given to impulsive political improvisation and pyrotechnics? Similarly, it is only now that the real Andropov is likely to emerge from behind the notoriety of his fifteen years' stint as head of the K.G.B., and from behind his more recent—and, one suspects, somewhat contrived—image as a man of cosmopolitan tastes who is not unfriendly to the capitalist West. In post-Stalin Russia, Andropov's K.G.B. past is bound to create some ever-so-slight embarrassment. Since Andropov's elevation to a secretaryship last May, Soviet travelers have taken pains to assure their hosts that he was not "a real" K.G.B. man, but had been delegated by the Party to supervise the secret police and prevent it from abusing its powers. Still, the leadership of the secret police is hardly a job to be given to, and held for so long by, a highly sensitive or squeamish individual.

AS TO ANDROPOV'S cosmopolitan image, it is fair to say that it is highly improbable that a liberal, "closet" or any other variety, could survive for long in the highest echelons of the Soviet hierarchy. Plainly, though, the new leader must be a man of great intelligence and political acumen. None of his predecessors as police chief had held that highly ticklish assignment for so many years. Only two went on to higher things, and not for long: Lavrenti Beria was shot, and Aleksandr Shelepin, after a period of political prominence, was dismissed from the Politburo. And so Yuri Vladimirovich had to be quite an agile politician to have made it to the very top of the slippery political pyramid from a position that in the past had eventually led, if not to a firing squad, then to political oblivion. Being an intelligent man, Andropov must realize that the regime cannot continue as it has, during the latter part of Brezhnev's reign, to sweep the most urgent domestic problems under the rug. If allowed by his senior colleagues, he will undoubtedly attempt to shake up the Party and state bureaucracy, and to impart new dynamism to the Soviet economy, now dangerously close to stagnation. Perhaps he will try to compensate for his background by some liberal-sounding pronouncements and gestures. (One remembers how Beria, after Stalin's death, made his short-lived bid for power by becoming a fervent proponent of "socialist legality.") But Andropov would not have been selected in the first place had his associates thought him inclined to tamper with the fundamental elements of the system.

BREZHNEV'S DEATH, the Kremlin must feel, was also particularly inopportune from the point of view of Soviet foreign policy interests. Again, no matter how strenuous Moscow's warnings that the U.S.S.R.'s position in world affairs has in no way been affected by the event, the changing of the guard is bound to create a feeling of uncertainty and apprehension among the Soviets' friends, and bring fresh hope to their antagonists. It is no accident that the Warsaw regime decided to release Lech Walesa after it received the news of Brezhnev's death. All over Eastern Europe the Communist satraps must be wondering whether their new boss will be as solicitous of their interests as the old one, and whether their people, counting on uncertainty and disarray in the Kremlin, might now give vent to their long-suppressed longings.

As for the main lines of Soviet foreign policy, it would be foolish to expect that the new leadership (or, to be more precise, up to now the new leader) will initiate basic changes in such areas as the Soviet Union's attitude toward the United States, China, and its own arms program. From the point of view of the Soviet oligarchy, Brezhnev's foreign policy must have been seen as the most successful aspect of his reign. It helped widen the breach between the West and its European allies, it expanded Soviet influence to new areas in the third world, and, toward the end, it made considerable progress papering over the dispute between the U.S.S.R. and China. Eschewing Khrushchev's missile-rattling while expanding Moscow's prodigious nuclear arsenal, Brezhnev succeeded in convincing most of the world (including many in the U.S.) that it was not the Soviet Union but America that has been the chief villain in the arms race.

And yet, on Brezhnev's foreign policies, as on his domestic policies, the future historian's verdict might well be that he failed to tackle the most serious problems and thus left a particularly heavy burden for his successor. Has the Soviet Union over-committed itself by trying to subvert and replace the influence of the West in practically every part of the world? Can Moscow reach a

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real rather than a superficial reconciliation with Peking if it does not constrain its imperialist striving in Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, and elsewhere? And if a genuine Sino-Soviet detente is possible, can the U.S.S.R. afford to wait until China becomes a major industrial and hence nuclear power, as it is bound to become in time? How long can the present pattern of Soviet domination over East Europe endure, with the Red Army being the sole guarantor of Communist rule over some 110 million people, the great majority of whom detest their regimes? Will the ailing economy be able to bear indefinitely the heavy burden of increasing outlays of expenditures and resources that go for armaments?

For the immediate future we may take the new leadership at its word: it will try to continue the foreign policies of its predecessor. To do otherwise would be, in its opinion, a sign of weakness and vacillation that would be noticed both in the Pentagon and in Poland. But in the longer run, the pressures and constraints of the still unfolding process of succession might well force Andropov and company to alter their tactics. At the same time, as long as the present oligarco-bureaucractic system endures, it is unwise to expect Russia's rulers to change their basic philosophy of international relations. And so the West would be foolish to hope that its own burdens could be lifted by some miraculous change of heart on the part of the current and any future prospective leaders of the Soviet Union.

Central America's showplace democracy is showing signs of strain.

CAREWORN COSTA RICA

BY SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN

San José, Costa Rica

IMAGINE A COUNTRY where would-be revolutionaries sit beside the bougainvillea and plot to overthrow other governments of the region, where officialdom has dabbled more or less openly in illegal arms traffic, where a revered former president has protected a famous fugitive from U.S. justice, and where the economy is more destitute than Poland's or Nicaragua's. At the same time, imagine a country that is a third world showplace of representative democracy, with peaceful, middle-of-the-road politics, a free and aggressive press, near-total literacy, and a fast-growing middle class—a place to which the rest of Latin America can look for proof that a government can administer to the social needs of its people without the accompanying totalitarianism and boredom of Cuba.

Costa Rica is both of these places, and the first set of circumstances is threatening to destroy the second. Presumably one of the reasons President Reagan plans to visit the country on December 4 is to help prevent that from happening. The President's host will be Luis Alberto Monge, a longtime stalwart of the National Liberation Party, who was inaugurated as President last May after a sweeping electoral victory. The big question facing Monge is whether he can pull the country out of bankruptcy and save it from Communism and political violence without setting off serious social unrest.

Shirley Christian is the Central American correspondent for *The Miami Herald*.

The challenge is producing a substantial shift in Liberation's social democratic philosophy. It has evolved from a party that traditionally advocated government spending, state participation in the economy, protection of human rights, and tolerance of leftist politics into one that promises fiscal restraint, support for private initiative, law and order, and close identification with the United States. Some thirty years ago, the young Monge was part of the small group led by José Figueres that founded National Liberation to consolidate the ideals of the 1948 revolution. Since then Liberation has dominated Costa Rica's smoothly functioning political system, but it has regularly relinquished power to successful candidates from coalitions of smaller parties. Figueres himself served two presidential terms, and now, in his 70s, presides as the unofficial patriarch of Costa Rican democracy. Though opposition to Communism was one of the tenets of the 1948 revolution, until recently Liberation has tended to accept the flirtations with radicalism of many fellow members of the Socialist International. In early 1981, however, apparently foreseeing a voter backlash, Liberation announced that it did not share the Socialist International's then uncritical support for the guerrilla movement in El Salvador and the Sandinista National Directorate in Nicaragua.

Communism does not outwardly appear to be knocking on the doors of Costa Rica's ultra-modern presidential palace, but collectors from nearly two hundred banks and financial institutions throughout the capitalist

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world have been pounding impatiently for many months. In four years, the government of former President Rodrigo Carazo ran up the foreign public debt from $800 million to $3 billion at a time when world prices for coffee, traditionally Costa Rica's leading export and dollar earner, were falling. In addition, the private sector borrowed about $1.2 billion abroad, largely because government deficits were taking most of the credit available from national banks. Local business leaders say that only Israel has a higher per capita foreign debt than this nation of 2.2 million people.

In September 1981 the Carazo government went into default on interest and principal payments on the debt after twice refusing to apply the austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for emergency aid. The new government inherited a situation in which both it and most Costa Rican private businesses were unable to borrow any more abroad until the old debts were renegotiated, which foreign bankers were refusing to do until the country made peace with the I.M.F. Accompanying all of this was the collapse of the colon, Costa Rica's currency. In relation to the dollar, it is now worth one-sixth what it was at the end of 1980.

MONGE came into office with a promise to make, and keep, an agreement with the I.M.F. as the first step toward economic recovery, but he was equally determined that political and social factors be taken into account, and not just the I.M.F.'s usual hardheaded economic guidelines. Monge argues that in this time of challenge to U.S. influence in Central America, Washington sorely needs a healthy Costa Rica as a bulwark against extremism and deprivation. So his economic team approached the debt problem with some precise steps. First it invited representatives of the I.M.F., the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank to Monge's inauguration, a rare opportunity to see democracy functioning in this region. Then it made its own set of proposals to the I.M.F., instead of simply reacting to those of the I.M.F., as the previous administration did. It went to New York and told the steering committee of the foreign commercial banks to which Costa Rica owes money that the new government was putting its house in order. Finally, since July it has been scraping up six to seven million dollars a month to make token payments on the interest owed to private foreign banks. Distributed among nearly two hundred lending institutions, it has not made much of an impact. One Swiss bank sent a telegram to the presidential palace asking if a zero hadn't been dropped from its check.

Rodolfo Silva, who directs the debt renegotiations, told me the intention is to apply at least 10 percent of Costa Rica's hard currency receipts each month to the interest owed. He said this will mean payments of six to ten million dollars a month on the debt to private foreign leaders and a similar amount to multilateral agencies, for a total interest payment of at least $120 million by the end of this year. He says that will make Costa Rica almost current with the backlog of interest due, but it won't make a dent in the principal owed.

After months of negotiations, the new government has also reached an agreement with the I.M.F. that will bring it about $100 million in emergency support. The price of this agreement is high. Hoping to win some concessions from the I.M.F. team on social and political grounds, the Costa Ricans began their own belt-tightening program almost as soon as Monge took office, raising electric rates by 56 percent, water as much as 108 percent, and gasoline by 70 percent. They cut the government budget across the board, despite inflation that exceeded 100 percent last year, and eliminated or reduced subsidies on food and basic consumer items. Even more austerity measures are being applied in these weeks, including further increases in utility rates, a narrowing in the bank and free-market dollar exchange rates, and increased interest rates.

There is widespread concern that these measures and others will cause social upheaval. Unemployment has doubled in the past year to 10 percent, underemployment is even higher, and both are likely to continue rising. There is a high bankruptcy rate among businesses, and many others say they can hold on for only a few more months. An investment banker who alternates his schedule between listening to the sad tales of people who owe him money and trying to hold off his own foreign creditors told me he fears that Costa Rica's situation will come to rampaging mobs in the streets, with people breaking store windows and knocking down doors to get food and other goods.

The Reagan Administration plans to substantially increase U.S. aid to Costa Rica, earmarking $70 million of the $350 million in the Caribbean Basin Initiative project—conditional on Costa Rica keeping its agreement with the I.M.F. In addition, Washington has promised other aid that will put the total for Costa Rica this year at more than $100 million. This is only a fraction of what Costa Rica will need over the next few years, and the real test will be whether the Monge government can win back the confidence of the foreign banks and international agencies and begin borrowing again.

THE COMMUNIST threat to Costa Rica, whether perceived or real, is even more complicated than the financial picture, shrouded as it is in Costa Rican history and the turmoil in three other Central American countries. Ever since achieving their own political democracy, Costa Ricans have felt an obligation to help other countries of the region accomplish the same thing, a commitment that has caused Costa Rica to open its doors to exiled plotters of all political stripes. Costa Rica has been home to Christian Democrats from El Salvador, social democrats from Venezuela, and members of Fidel Castro's little band before they gathered for their push out of the Sierra Maestra. Most recently, it has hosted Guatemalan revolutionaries, Salvadoran guerril-

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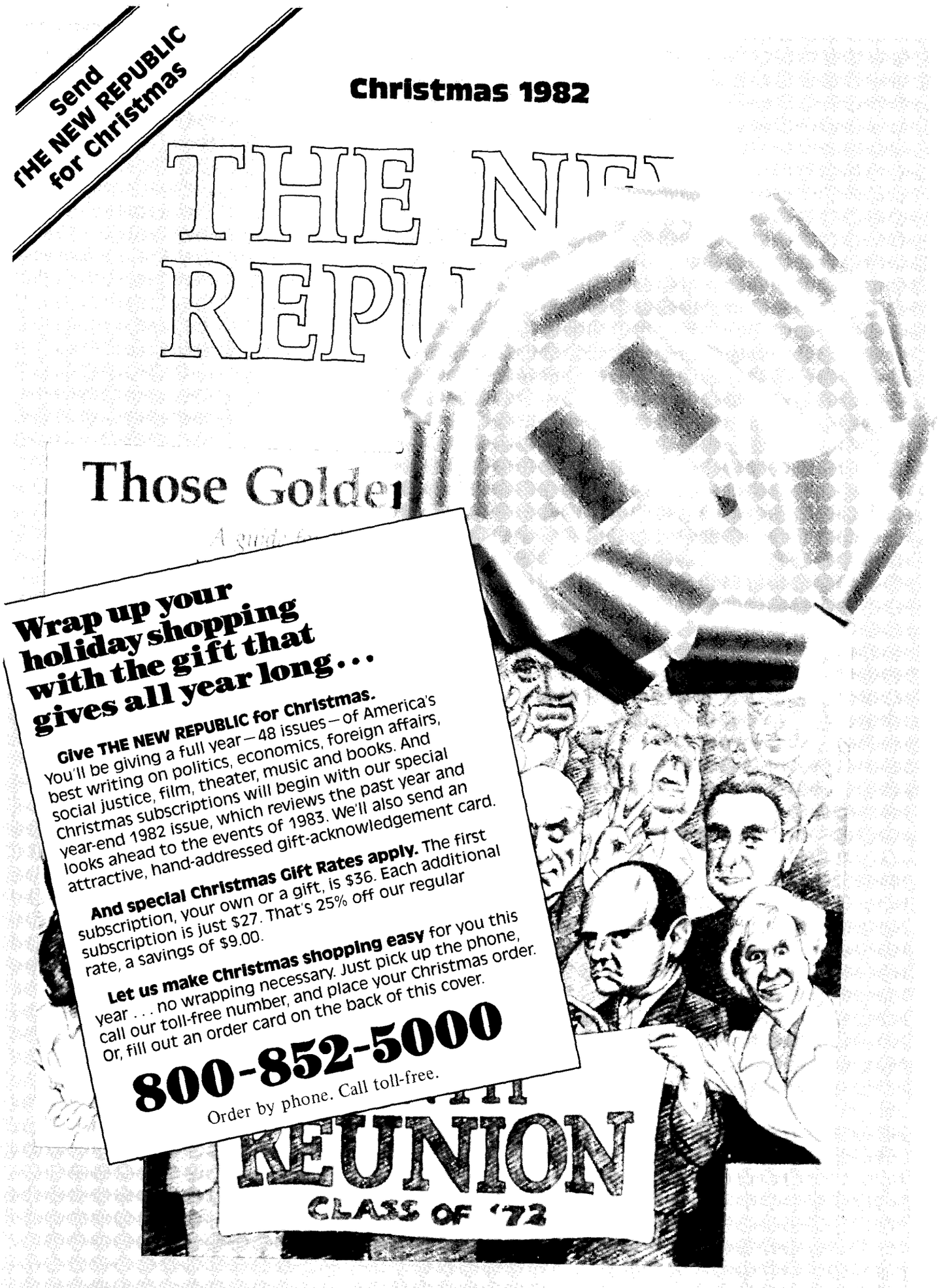

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las and their sympathizers, and Nicaraguan opponents of the ruling Sandinista National Directorate. In addition, people from other Western Hemisphere countries tend to gravitate here to support one or another of those causes. Costa Rica's own Communist movement, founded in 1929, has operated above ground for much of its history, primarily through the Popular Vanguard Party and the strike-inclined labor unions representing workers on the Caribbean coast banana plantations. Manuel Mora Valverde, Communism's 72-year-old father figure in Costa Rica, is an establishment politician credited with inventing Eurocommunism ahead of the Europeans. His party enjoys only minimal representation in the Legislative Assembly through a coalition of small leftist parties. Until lately there was no suspicion that Costa Rica's political left was involved in terrorism, but during the election campaign there were allegations that at least one of the younger leftist candidates had terrorist ties, and several months ago the Judicial Police raided the home of Mora Valverde himself and found seventeen firearms, five thousand bullets, sixteen fragmentation grenades, and some dynamite and detonators. An incensed Mora Valverde told the court the arsenal was for his own protection, and to many non-Communists in this weapons-loving country that sounded perfectly logical.

WHATEVER the involvement of Costa Rica's legal Communists, there has been a very real outbreak of political terrorism here since early 1981. It began when a bomb tore through a U.S. Embassy van carrying Marine guards, seriously wounding three Marines and slightly wounding two passersby. An hour later, a bomb exploded at the Honduran Embassy. Over the next three months police arrested ten terrorist suspects in the attacks, but only after shootouts in which three policemen and a taxi driver were killed. One male suspect died of wounds, and a civil guardsman later went into a jail cell and shot to death a nineteen-year-old female suspect to avenge the deaths of the policemen.

So far this year, terrorist actions have included the bombing of the apartment of a prominent Nicaraguan exile, Fernando Chamorro; the attempted kidnapping of a Salvadoran businessman, with a death toll of three; and the discovery in a San José house of an arms cache apparently destined for guerrilla forces in El Salvador; the bombing of the San José office of TAN-SAHSA, the Honduran airline; and the attempted kidnapping of a Japanese businessman by a group of Salvadorans. The arms operation was sophisticated enough to have a fleet of cars with hidden compartments to transport the weapons through Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras into El Salvador. Costa Rican authorities blamed three Nicaraguan diplomats for the TAN-SAHSA bombing and expelled them, suggesting that the bombing was a reprisal for several thousand anti-Sandinista guerrillas being allowed to operate from Honduras.

Monge has sworn to get tough on terrorism, and has implied that Costa Rica will no longer be such an appealing mecca for insurgent groups even if they are not engaged in violence within Costa Rica. His predecessor too had begun to take a tougher stance, expelling a group of Guatemalans and closing a radio transmitter that was being used to broadcast support for extreme leftist groups all over Latin America. Monge's greatest test in the matter of exile groups will concern Edén Pastora, the Sandinista hero who broke with Nicaragua's ruling National Directorate, accused its nine members of violating their democratic commitment in favor of Marxist totalitarianism, and threatened to launch a new insurrection. He chose Costa Rica, his second home for many years, as the place to go public, leaving the impression that Costa Rica might again be the staging place for a Nicaraguan war, as it was during the 1978-1979 effort to oust the late President Anastasio Somoza.

THE COSTA RICANS gave generous assistance to the Sandinistas during the last Nicaraguan war, allowing them to use the northern province of Guanacaste as a sanctuary from which to launch operations in the south of Nicaragua. Costa Rica was also where the Sandinistas took delivery of weapons shipped to them first from Venezuela and later from Cuba. A subsequent investigation by the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly established that Juan José Echeverria, then-minister of public security, a man close to then-President Carazo, oversaw the arrival and transfer of the weapons. There was also testimony suggesting that a percentage of the weapons—as much as 25 percent—remained in the hands of someone in Costa Rica. The same investigation indicated that at least some of these weapons were sold to Salvadoran guerrillas in 1980.

It was Pastora in large part who won Costa Rica's support in the last Sandinista war when he was military chief of the so-called Southern Front (see "Nicaraguan Nemesis," TNR, May 26), and Costa Ricans still hold him, and his cause, to their collective bosom. Although the new Pastora crusade fits easily into the growing fear among Costa Ricans that they are getting a Marxist-Leninist government for a neighbor, Monge is clearly worried that Costa Rican support for Pastora could produce an invasion from highly militarized Nicaragua. He believes he has to put this consideration first, despite his known personal sympathies for Pastora's goals.

So when Pastora put on fatigues and went to an isolated spot along the Nicaraguan border, accompanied by three plane loads of television crews and journalists to receive a group of defecting Sandinista soldiers, Monge threw him out of the country. Within a few months, however, Pastora was allowed to return, on the condition that he keep a low profile. He is now surrounded by supporters in a comfortable two-story house on a hillside overlooking San José.

There are also signs that Costa Rica may become less hospitable to fugitives of a more common type. Just before taking office, Monge had a heated argument with

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Figueres about the former president's sponsorship of the return here last April of Robert Vesco, the fugitive U.S. financier. Figueres, in his patriarch status, is accustomed to making his own decisions about what is good for Costa Rica. "We need investors, so we shouldn't worry about how a man made his money before coming to Costa Rica," Figueres says to anyone who questions his friendship with Vesco and other people with questionable pasts. People close to Monge told me the new President threatened to turn Vesco over to U.S. authorities, and Vesco immediately left the country. Since then, he has reportedly been dividing his time among Nicaragua, Cuba, and a yacht in the Caribbean. Vesco first came to Costa Rica in 1972, but went to the Bahamas in 1978 after the newly elected Carazo declared him undesirable. Vesco left the Bahamas last year under threat of expulsion.

The Vesco case is just one of several dozen examples of U.S. fugitives—some fleeing murder charges, many fleeing drug charges—finding refuge under Costa Rica's strong human rights tradition and weak security system. The sixty-year-old extradition treaty between the U.S. and Costa Rica covers only specifically stated crimes, and many of the crimes for which people are sought today, such as conspiracy and drug-running, were unknown then. Extradition has also been hampered by the fact that Costa Rican courts have traditionally refused to approve extradition to countries where a prisoner's human rights might be violated, including foreigners sought by their own country. Costa Ricans tend to believe that such violation will occur in almost any other country, including the United States.

THE MONGE government has entered into negotiations with the U. S. for a new extradition treaty that will cover virtually any crime punishable by more than two years in the country seeking the fugitive. Although the treaty-writing began only in late October, it is expected to be completed quickly, in part because Costa Rican officials have begun to see the potential danger in their country becoming a haven for fugitives at a time when the economic crisis makes Costa Ricans unusually susceptible to bribery and other criminal temptations. Even as the writing of the treaty was beginning, the Costa Rican courts broke tradition by ordering the extradition of a fugitive from a California fraud conviction.

The new government is also facing up to the lack of training and professionalism in the security forces, which have proved inept in dealing with fugitives and political violence alike. The cases of political terrorism that have been cracked have done so almost by accident—Pink Panther style, some have observed—suggesting that they represent only the surface of the country's security problem. Even Vesco's return to Costa Rica became known only after Sunday dinner guests at Figueres's ranch, La Lucha, found themselves at the same table with the fugitive, and then spread the story around the capital. Improving the security forces, however, is a touchy job in a country that has no standing army, a fact that is generally thought to have contributed to the survival of democratic government. The two main uniformed forces, the Civil Guard and a Rule Guard, have a total of seven thousand men who handle everything from traffic control to border control and search and rescue. Criminal investigation is the domain of the Judicial Police. Costa Rican security forces are not generally accused of being repressive, but they are largely untested, and the killing last year of the woman in jail suggests they might not use restraint in trying situations.

So Monge began shopping for foreign expertise even before his inauguration. He spoke initially of making contacts with the governments of West Germany, Israel, and Taiwan. His minister of public security mentioned the possibility of creating an antiterrorist force. There was never any mention of creating a regular army. The only significant known help so far is coming from the United States, which has increased its military assistance to Costa Rica from zero to more than two million dollars over the past three years.

UNDER the previous government, the Costa Rican forces had quietly begun receiving a small amount of U.S. training in Panama, made possible after State Department lawyers "reinterpreted" U.S. laws against providing training for foreign police forces. Congress had limited the training to armies or other national defense forces after the public outcry of the 1960s about the United States training torturers in South America. The U.S. training of the Costa Rican forces, given primarily in Panama, was valued at $30,000 in fiscal year 1981, $50,000 in fiscal 1982, and will be $150,000 in fiscal 1983. In addition, in September, the Reagan Administration approved a $2 million grant for such items as uniforms, field equipment, radios, river patrol boats, tents, and ammunition. This grant sent off a brief uproar in Costa Rica, forcing the government to deny that it had militarization in mind.

Monge told me the United States has also offered arms to Costa Rica, but that he doesn't want them. When he visited Washington in June, his military shopping list included only a few jeeps, some uniforms and communications equipment, and three helicopters to patrol the frontier. The most important thing, he said, is economic help. "The United States has been criticized for following a policy of putting out fires, and it is very difficult to put out a fire," he says. "In the case of Costa Rica . . . if help comes now to face the economic and social problems the fire will be prevented."

Rodolfo Silva, the debt negotiator, expressed a sentiment that I found to be common in the new government —that it is remarkably easy for a nondemocratic country such as El Salvador, which has mismanaged human rights, to obtain large amounts of military and economic assistance from the United States. "But for a country like Costa Rica, which has only mismanaged its economy, the help is very slow," Silva said.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A New Naturalism

One of my favorite critical anecdotes: A Paris literary critic, c. 1900, wrote a long essay proving that naturalism was dead. Another critic, away from Paris at the time, heard about the essay just as it was going to press and immediately telegraphed the first man: "Naturalism not dead. Letter follows."

Smithereens
(New Line Cinema)

Letters have been following for some time now, and they have generally been right. Naturalism did not die: it persisted pluralistically, as it had been and also in mutation. The first wave of naturalistic art, the Goncourt-Zola wave, was meant to shake the paunchy bourgeoisie with seamy facts that they were eager to ignore. That sort of naturalism held center stage for only a few decades, until symbolism and other successors took the spotlight, but even in its pristine form, naturalism never disappeared. And in recent decades, it has taken on a new being. The morphology is the same, the intent different. Naturalism is no longer used as a fact-bearer but as a truth-teller. It no longer brings us information about our society, which we can now get from multiple other sources: it has become a style, one of the stylistic options available to the artistic imagination. This is especially clear in the theater with the plays of, for instance, David Storey (England), Franz Xaver Kroetz (Germany), and Wolfgang Bauer (Austria).

In film, surprisingly, naturalism has had a somewhat different history—surprisingly because film might seem to be the perfect and permanent medium for "classical" naturalism. And from earliest days—Stroheim's *Greed* is not the first example—"classical" naturalism has had a place in film. But, in part because naturalism *is* so easy for film, it has moved to deeper dimensions, greater complexities.

Yvette Biró treats the matter, along with other important issues, in her thoughtful new book, *Profane Mythology: The Savage Mind of the Cinema* (Indiana University Press). Says Biró:

> The usual methods of recording reality had been transformed into the reality of recording. . . . In what lies film's originality . . . ? First of all, in the prosaic nature of its symbolization, in the profane concreteness of abstraction. . . . Natural existence is realized in direct physical movements and reactions. . . . The film lifts memorable elements out of their usual surroundings, cleanses them, pares them down, and then holds them close to us. Thus we see a hitherto hidden but very expressive face.

This power lies to any filmmaker's hand as the power of an automobile lies to the hand of any fool who can turn an ignition key. Many of the dullest and/or exploitative cinematic minds have been quick to exploit that cinematic power. "Memorable moments" have not been their concern: all they have focused on is the facile use of this power. Think of Warhol and, especially, his epigones.

But a new American film, superficially akin to the Warhol school, moves into some of the domain that Biró describes; it understands the principle of concreteness as abstraction. For the first few minutes *Smithereens* seems like one more post-film-school student film, dealing in somewhat jagged terms with materials closest to the director's experience and purse, justifying itself by the mere fact of being a film. But this director, Susan Seidelman, explores the gritty lives of young people in SoHo with vision and *idea*, and the result is a work of odd, pertinent, artistic substance.

This is Seidelman's first feature: she has made three previous shorter films. With Ron Nyswaner, she devised this story, then Nyswaner and Peter Askin wrote the screenplay. Those facts are relevant in a peculiarly partial way; it's quickly apparent that the events of the story are trite, and it's quickly apparent that this is unimportant. I soon began to think (certainly not because of the subject) of Scott Fitzgerald's stories about a Hollywood agent named Pat Hobby. The stories as such are mostly poor, some of them are dreadful; but read as a whole, the Pat Hobby stories take on depth because the narratives become the background: Pat's character and the Hollywood milieu are what matter.

With *Smithereens* Seidelman seems to have decided that she needed some sort of action, some arrangement of encounters and rebuffs and problems for her heroine, simply to keep the young woman in motion: but the story would simply be a means of enabling us to spend some time with the heroine, to see her world with her in it. The events serve as kinetic filler, while we watch and listen and perceive. What the film is really about is not what happens but her condition: her hassled, befuddled response to contemporary American hype, her ambition to float in a sea of trashy chic.

The woman is played by Susan Berman, who is quite right for the part in temperament and in looks—blithely gaunt. We first see her in the subway, pasting up xerox copies of a photograph or handing them to people. These are photos of herself, and the only words on them are "Who Is This?" Our first apprehensive reaction is that this is going to be

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Brimstone and Treacle. A diabolical young man slithers into an English suburban home. Script almost clever enough, performances—by Denholm Elliott, Joan Plowright, and a rock singer called Sting—much better.

The Missionary. Michael Palin of Monty Python wrote and stars in this 1906 comedy about an Anglican priest's misadventures while trying to reform London tarts. Much of it funny, all funnily performed.

My Favorite Year. New York, 1954. A young TV comedy writer is assigned to get a wildly erratic film star to the studio on time. Peter O'Toole as the star *is* the star.

Time Stands Still. The Budapest children who lived through 1956 seen seven years later. Teenage troubles with a difference. A touch arty, but often touching.

SK

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a film about a search for identity: but it's nothing so conventional, so formulaic. Her handouts are a search for *publicity*—publicity to no definable end, just publicity. Berman has come to New York to be part of The Scene, to differentiate herself from her married and baby-bearing sister, somehow to be borne aloft, somehow to be part of the swing and the dazzle.

She works in a xerox copy center, yet is locked out of her room for nonpayment of rent. She flops where and with whom she can. Two men figure. One is a sweet youth from Montana, played reticently by Brad Rinn, who lives in a van parked in a vacant lot on the lower West Side. (His quiet, vulnerable devotion is the one "fictional" touch in the picture. Montana=Sweetness. Why does someone from the Wide Open Spaces have to be like Gary Cooper? Why not like Gary Gilmore?) And there is a rock musician, coolly played by Richard Hell, who tolerates her from time to time and finally dumps her. By then she has lost Montana Slim, whose patience has frazzled. At the end she is walking along the streets, carrying her bags, bound nowhere; is buzzed by a man in a car; ignores him, is pursued by him. He asks whether she has any *other* place to go. She halts and turns to him in a (regrettable) freeze frame.

THE MORAL TONE of this film is unearned despair; that, I emphasize, is its chosen tone, not my criticism. In a recent Italian film called *The Meadow*, when young people sat around and wallowed in hopelessness, they were irritating because they were supposed to be intellectuals, superior beings who had looked into the empty hand of a nonexistent God but who affected the viewer only as egocentric louts, wasting good lives that were available to them. Not Berman or her friends. They haven't peered into anything; all they have are poses—with cigarettes. When Berman is abandoned by the rock musician at the end, she says to another girl, whom he has also abandoned, that she has been, figuratively, fucked. The other girl says bitterly, "Life is fucked." The line is a pitifully juvenile profundity and, for that reason, exactly right. Berman and peers are not the victims of existential despair or anomie or any collapse that requires a height from which to fall. She and her peers are more or less where they have always been, the walking wounded of bombardment by hype—by disc-jockey, discotheque, *National Enquirer*, TV-commercial, carbonic-gas-injected hype. And all she has is a hunger to be the subject of that hype—maybe by some sort of connection with a rock group—instead of its victim.

Two elements in this film are especially strong. First is the verity of the girl. She is stupid, deceitful, desperate, like some sort of crawly insect that attaches itself to any available surface, especially a glitzy one. The unswerving disregard for audience sympathy with which she is written and directed and played commands respect and attention.

The other element is Seidelman's filmmaking skill. *Smithereens* shows fluency, a good eye, control. First films often look skimpy, as if just enough footage had been shot to splice together a cogent narrative. *Smithereens* feels easy, selective; in fact, Seidelman had so much to choose from in some sequences that she overedits a bit, works in too many reverse angles, too many tracking shots. Some economy, particularly toward the end, would have helped.

Her film made me think of *Wanda*, which was written and directed by the late Barbara Loden, with Loden in the leading role (TNR, March 27, 1971). *Wanda*, which I think is an ignored small gem, is far superior to *Smithereens*, but it too deals with a young woman subjected to emotional battering. In Loden's film, the assault is by male selfishness; in Seidelman's it's by incessant glitz. Both films, as it happens, end with a freeze frame, as the protagonist is apparently entering on a life of whoring, the one security that's left.

Wanda is a fine work of "classical" naturalism. *Smithereens* is less deft and, essentially, less traditional: it moves past "the recording of reality" to "the reality of recording." In Biró's term, it is an abstraction made concrete. It doesn't want to wring our withers with a new kind of tragic fall, a dumb-prole protagonist instead of a queen. It uses surnaturalism to abstract concretely the being of this self-centered girl who has no certifiable self. It shows us that the camera can find and dramatize the center of such a being unaided by two thousand years of conditioning by tragedy. No one can be deeply moved by the fate of this girl. That is precisely what this film is deliberately and movingly *about*.

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WHY MANNERS MATTER

Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior by Judith Martin

(Atheneum, 768 pp., $19.95)

The History of Manners by Norbert Elias translated by Edmund Jephcott

(Pantheon, 310 pp., $8.95, paper)

Power and Civility by Norbert Elias translated by Edmund Jephcott

(Pantheon, 376 pp., $22.50)

An upstart among nations, America has been busy catching up on the civilized art of etiquette ever since its founding. The father of our country himself started out insecure about social courtesies. In search of the graces that might make him the nation's "first gentleman," George Washington turned to foreigners, who had fine manners at their fingertips. At fifteen, he transcribed 102 "Rules of Civility" from assorted European manners manuals into his own copybook. He was, evidently, anxious about the most rudimentary of refinements. "Shake not the head, feet or legs, roll not the eye," George admonished his ungainly body; "lift not one eyebrow higher than the other; wry not the mouth, and bedew no man's face with your spittle by approaching too near him when you speak." Aspiring to greater elegance, Americans ever since have consulted foreign connoisseurs of social conduct, importing subtler airs—a touch of English elitism, a little French elegance—to flavor the melting pot of American manners. Even in this century, when America contributed two etiquette classics of its own, their authors still invoked Old World wisdom. Amy Vanderbilt emphasized her Dutch descent, as well as her "good admixture of Irish, English, and French blood," in her 1952 encyclopedia of etiquette, and Emily Post's blue blood flowed freely through her 1922 guide.

The egalitarian bustle of life in America, Tocqueville observed, is what muddles manners here. It's in stratified, leisurely existence that manners flourish, serving both to mark invidious distinctions among social classes and to maintain the far more fundamental and attractive distinctions between informal, private selves and gracious social personas. Such discriminations have not come naturally to Americans, although cosmopolitan dowagers and their etiquette manuals have tried to help. Two decades or so ago, however, those experts went into eclipse, and of all unlikely arbiters to succeed them, American youths took charge of contemporary manners. Often refreshingly, other times abrasively, they challenged the invidious social distinctions they saw around them. More problematic, however, they also helped undermine the difference between public and private ways of behaving. "Let it all hang out," was the new liberating code. Genteel hypocrisy fell into disrepute. Honesty, often brutal, took its place. The ethic of total sincerity proved as taxing as remembering which fork to use for what, when to offer a seat to whom.

The mood, according to pulse-takers, is now swinging back. *The New York Times*'s "Living" section, spotting flower children growing up into young professionals with a taste for traditional styles in their social lives, has announced a trend: "Once Again, Etiquette is a Popular Topic." The 1978 edition of Amy Vanderbilt, revised by Letitia Baldridge, is selling well, and a *New Emily Post's Etiquette* will soon appear.

To be sure, the old classics require some updating to make them stylishly, rather than hopelessly, anachronistic. Even the original arbiters revised their advice in successive editions of their manuals, gracefully (if regretfully) accommodating small social changes. Emily Post, for example, took in her stride the disappearance during the roaring '20s of chaperones to keep young couples in check on dates. Their contemporary imitators, however, have to cope with a change far more threatening to the enterprise of traditional etiquette: the decline of the social inhibitions and polite hypocrisies that keep egos of all ages in check in public. As Letitia Baldridge confesses, the change is confusing: "Life had changed so much during the late sixties and seventies that it was a fast foot race to keep up with it." Trying to catch up with the new sincere style, Mrs. Baldridge and others often lose track of the goal of old-fashioned etiquette, which was to help people cultivate a poised appearance in public, never mind whether it feels natural or not.

There is, however, one new etiquette expert who's not at all flustered by the "fast foot race" of modern times: Miss Manners, author of *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior*, who arrives on the etiquette scene in a brougham. ("Miss Manners does not herself jog," she explains. "She would not know how to manage her parasol while out jogging in summer, nor her muff in winter.") Old-fashioned and Anglophilic Miss Manners (otherwise known as Judith Martin) has now collected her syndicated newspaper columns in a book, where she makes no apologies for announcing that her interest, and civilization's, lies not in easing personal anxiety but in promoting social harmony. "The true value in people is not what is in their murky psyches, which some keep in as shocking a state as their bureau drawers but in how they treat others," she firmly believes. "Miss Manners does not want people to act naturally; she wants them to act civilly."

Miss Manners knows hers is a novel and arduous task: to teach etiquette to an audience that has forgotten about *not* letting private things hang out in public. On the one hand, she can't adopt the graciously stuffy Vanderbilt style, which presumes old-fashioned, uptight readers eager to acquire strictly social skills. On the other hand, she abhors the new self-help salesmen, who talk "straight" and "sincerely" to readers eager to improve themselves in the bedroom, the board-

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room, and everywhere in between. Miss Manners's solution is an ironic style. Neither a salesman nor the classic experts on manners would dream of adopting such a tone, but in fact it's an apt one for the subject. A sense of irony—an appreciation of how things often seem quite different from the way they really are—is, after all, essential to etiquette. For as Miss Manners explains, manners "involve the appearance of things, rather than the total reality"; etiquette, she instructs, "is the imposition of civil behavior over the chaos of instinct." Think of the English, who are renowned for their civility—and, not coincidentally, for their mastery of irony. Americans, by contrast, are legendary for their sincerity, and have lots to learn.

Miss Manners means to inculcate a gentle appreciation of irony (essential to politeness) but not to encourage cruel expressions of it (the height of rudeness)—a challenging enterprise. While Miss Manners condescendingly addresses those who write in for advice as "Gentle Readers," and then treats them as the crudest of creatures, her readers must not imitate her cutting tone in their lives (although they may in their letters, and do). They're to cultivate the "weak smile" or "icy stare" when people rudely blunder, not the "snappy comeback or putdown" that Miss Manners herself can indulge in only because she's in the anomalous—and unmannerly—position of correcting others in newsprint.

Miss Manners has to hope that her readers, however tempted by her style, will pay more attention to the substance of her etiquette, where she's more constructively unconventional. When they take her encyclopedia off the shelf in search of advice on the big, formal occasions—marriages, etc.—they won't find her making much ado about upholding elaborate protocol, as her predecessors did. She refreshingly urges common sense instead. And when readers flip through her pages for help in everyday life, they may be surprised that she isn't willing to waffle on the etiquette of social relations, as the old arbiters and their revisers often were. Miss Manners insists, stubbornly but not hysterically, on the old forms here—no racy revisionism to keep up with the times for her.

Thus she dismisses the notion that the generations now interact according to a new, iconoclastic code. Relations between young and old have never been peaceful, Miss Manners notes, and she proclaims herself a longstanding "nonaligned power in the war between the generations." Both sides need reminding, now as ever, that politeness is the only acceptable weapon.

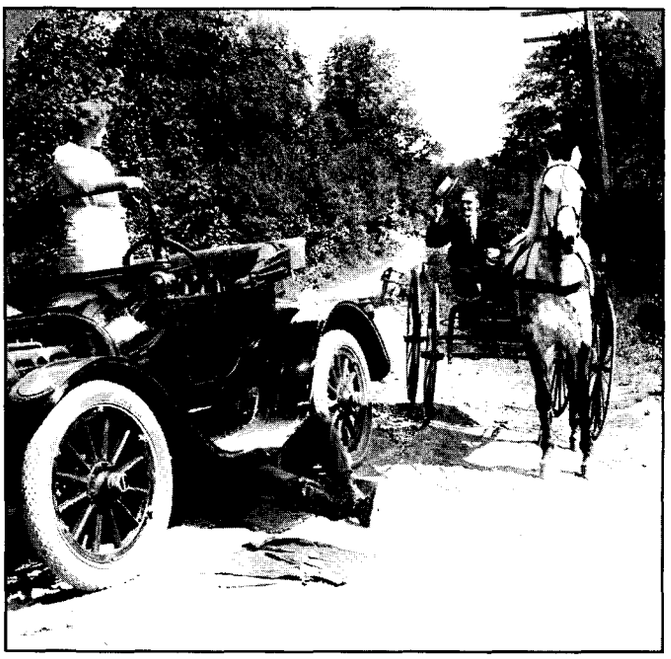
As for that other most sensitive etiquette issue, relations between men and women, she refuses to get agitated about the "horrendous problems arising from Modern Sex." On the contrary, "diligently as Miss Manners has been doing her research, she has been unable to discover any true innovations in the relations between the genders during the twentieth century." It's the talk, not the acts, that have changed:

> The only modern development she has observed is the custom of self-gossip—that is, of making one's own activities so public as to force people who had been perfectly aware of what was happening but essentially uninvolved to take stances of approval or disapproval.

But this trend toward total revelation is the truly revolutionary one—not only in love but in life, and in the etiquette of both. In love, this innovation has brought trivial problems—such as how to introduce one's lover (by name, Miss Manners suggests: why make one's sex life public at the door?). It has also occasioned more serious changes in men's and women's relations—such as the end of leisurely, suspenseful courtship (which depends on postponing total personal revelation).

In life, this "self-gossip" means that social existence is no longer much different from the familiar private round. That certainly makes sociability easier. There's no mysterious and challenging public world to interpret when every self is spelled—and spilled—out. However, it also makes social life less invigorating and interesting; such confessional characters tend to mope a lot in general, be boring at parties, and impossible in conversations. Succumbing to depression may be natural and easy, but cultivating a degree of "false cheer" is more suitable for social occasions. Especially at parties, people should strive to be good company, not slump in their private ruts. A successful gathering, according to Miss Manners, "should be full of tension. Tension is what makes people sparkle at parties, because they are trying to live up to the occasion, to make a lasting impression on one another, and to be invited back. The proper amount of social tension will make the interesting people put forth their best efforts, and dull people strive to be at least ingratiating. Who knows, it may even inspire them to be interesting." The tense guests might long for some more laid-back company to leaven such an occasion. But at least there won't be any deadly "communication"—"people expressing their true feelings and telling everything about themselves with complete honesty, holding nothing back except their last names." Instead, there is a chance for real conversation, which consists of exploring new ideas, not of exposing familiar selves. "Shifting our attention from our own feelings to other people's thoughts": that imaginative leap is the key, as Miss Manners knows, to better manners and thus to better parties, conversations, loves, and lives.

Like American arbiters before her, Miss Manners has absorbed much of her etiquette expertise from abroad. She has



THE TRIUMPH OF COURTESY OVER TECHNOLOGY
1914 PHOTOGRAPH, THE GRANGER COLLECTION

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read widely in the foreign literature on her subject, both novels (she's a Trollope fan) and nonfiction (she's especially fond of "dear" Erasmus and his *De civilitate morum puerilium*—On civility in children). Now another work has been translated for those interested in manners: *The Civilizing Process* by Norbert Elias, a Swiss historical sociologist. Begun in volume one, *The History of Manners*, and continued in volume two, *Power and Civility*, Elias's study is now available in English for the first time in its entirety (volume one was published here by itself in 1978). Written in 1939, this idiosyncratic and ambitious work has been virtually ignored until now. Elias's analysis of the progress and purpose of manners, however, proves unexpectedly similar to Miss Manners's prescriptions.

Compared to her prose, his is unpolished; sociological abstraction and Germanic ungainliness are ill-designed, unfortunately, to put most readers at ease. But Elias is well worth the strain of polite attentiveness, for beneath his ponderousness there are insights and revealing details. In his *History of Manners* he painstakingly reads his way through many centuries of manners manuals, unearthing valuable etiquette artifacts. He discovers, for example, that in eleventh-century Venice, citizens were scandalized when their doge's Greek bride lifted food to her mouth "by means of little golden forks with golden prongs"—a decadent instrument in vogue in her native Byzantium but not yet in her adopted country, where fingers were still in style. Hands remained generally acceptable implements for five more centuries, provided they were properly used. "You should always eat with the outside hand," wrote the thirteenth-century German arbiter Tannhäuser. "If your companion sits on your right, eat with your left hand. Refrain from eating with both hands." As for the less delicate matter of digesting, early manuals were remarkably frank and detailed in their prescriptions. "Listen to the old maxim about the sound of wind," counseled Erasmus in his sixteenth-century work. "If it can be purged without a noise, that is best. But it is better that it be emitted with a noise than it be held back." A tip: "Let a cough hide the explosive sound." Two centuries later in France, another adviser was no longer so lax: "It is very impolite to emit wind from your body when in company, even if it is done without a noise."

But fascinating though Elias finds the minutiae of manners of eating, sleeping, noseblowing, and spitting, his main aim is to formulate a theory of how and why manners have changed since feudal times—why what would have rated as a refined repast in medieval days, for instance, would now seem nauseatingly messy. When Elias turns to philosophizing in *Civility and Power*, his project becomes less accessible. "The civilizing of conduct and the corresponding transformation of human consciousness and libidinal make-up," he announces,

> cannot be understood without tracing the process of state-formation, and within it the advancing centralization of society which first finds particularly visible expression in the absolutist form of life.

Despite the cumbersome formulation, Elias's basic thesis is unexpectedly simple and convincing: as society became more centralized, individuals came into closer contact and began to exercise greater self-constraint—"more affect control," in Elias's jargon, "more complex and secure 'super-ego agency.'" (Miss Manners, remember, says much the same thing, in a plainer way, drawing on her more limited social survey: "the imposition of civil behavior over the chaos of instinct," the shifting of "attention from our own feelings to other people's thoughts," is what equips us to live in complex civil society rather than in self-centered worlds.)

However, Elias's laborious tracing of that process of state-formation—from feudal fiefdoms, to absolutist courts, and at last to the modern nation state—might not be everyone's cup of tea. Certainly it's unlikely to suit historians and sociologists, whose researches over the four decades since Elias wrote raise all kinds of questions about his anachronistic state-centered vision of the process of political and social change. By invigorating contrast, Elias's analysis of the transformation of "human consciousness and libidinal makeup"—the rise of that "super-ego agency"—is not at all dated, and far from dull. The increase in inhibitions he describes occurring since the Middle Ages is not so different from what Miss Manners prescribes for a more polite future—or, for that matter, from what we can vaguely remember happening within us over our own history since uncouth childhood.

Feudal knights, Elias judges by the

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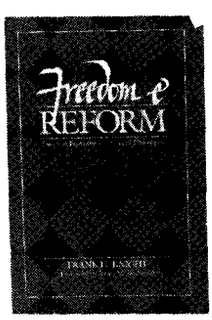

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Essays in Economics and Social Philosophy

By Frank H. Knight
Foreword by James M. Buchanan

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elementary level and tone of their etiquette books, behaved like powerful and uninhibited children. Vigorously (often violently) engaged in self-defense and self-gratification, they had only minimal manners, and nobody minded. "What was lacking," Elias acutely observes of this impulsive personality, "was the invisible wall of affects which seems now to rise between one body and another, repelling and separating." The courtiers who congregated later in absolutist courts were far more careful types; relying now on central royal authority for physical protection, they vied (rarely violently) for influence and advancement. Crude feudal *courtoisie* was replaced by a more exacting code as courtiers strived to maintain their status, fending off the bourgeoisie below. The "threshold of shame and embarrassment" rose, Elias writes, and rational forethought became a more important guide to conduct; fingers were out and forks in, bodily functions hidden, spontaneous impulses suppressed, and more elaborate proprieties established. Henceforth those "invisible walls" were everywhere, creating private selves who anxiously calculated their actions and reactions with reference to a public world of inferiors, superiors, and equals "out there." Unlike brusque Miss Manners, Elias wistfully notes the naiveté lost in, and the neuroses entailed by, the creation of this restrained self so crucial to civilization.

Elias was convinced that this self-constrained psyche would never crumble, just as he was sure that the world would become ever more stable and centralized—until one day perhaps it might even be secure enough for the repressed soul to relax just a little. In fact, there's already been a lot of relaxation. Those "invisible walls" that once kept psyches private and society civil seem to be lower lately. The murky souls that once lurked within now often leak out—thinner, less interesting in the open air. To stare at all that others display and to listen to self-gossip, which used to be rude, is now routine—which makes it less fascinating, less fun. Meanwhile, trying to imagine what others keep hidden behind invisible walls, which used to intrigue and also to inspire good manners, has become rare. When fewer imaginations are at work, society seems shallower and more monotonous, and our manners, those appearances that refine reality, less worth minding.

ANN HULBERT

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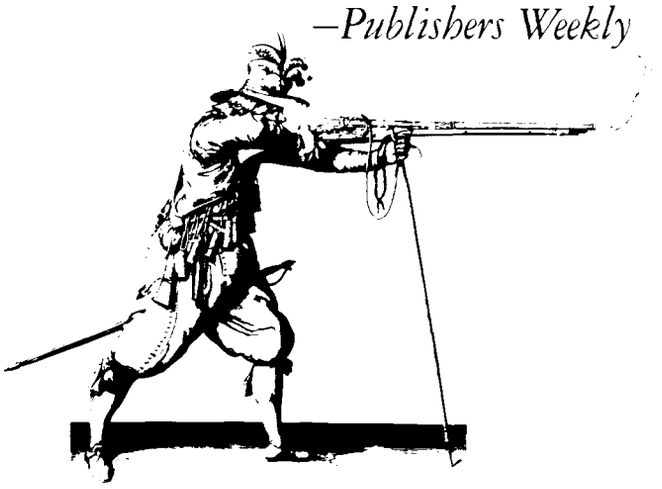

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THE PIOUS ENGINEER

Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President by Jimmy Carter

(Bantam, 622 pp., $22.50)

Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency by Hamilton Jordan

(G.P. Putnam's Sons, 431 pp., $16.95)

> 'Jody, we were so sure it was happening. After nine months of waiting, there was finally some genuine good news on the hostages. It seemed only right for the President to announce it. He's had to deliver all the bad news and eat crow so many times. Anyway, we had to respond to Bani-Sadr's speech.'
>
> 'Look', Jody said, irritated, 'you don't have to convince me, Ham—I'm just telling you that we are about to have an enormous credibility problem. The combination of not campaigning and that early-morning announcement has made skeptics out of even our friends in the press.'
>
> 'That's ridiculous. We couldn't choose when Bani-Sadr gave that speech. I think you're overreacting.'

As Hamilton Jordan tells it in *Crisis*, this is Mr. Jordan, special assistant to the President, and Jody Powell, press secretary, discussing the crack-of-dawn "good news" press conference the President gave on the morning of the Wisconsin primary election.

I have a credibility problem with the dialogue, but no matter. This is life in Washington's fastest lane, and if it doesn't read as well as John Updike or the late John Cheever—that is to say, if it does not *convince*, and suggest a life beneath the words, bone under the fat—it is indisputably first-hand evidence, these two books together comprising the first testimony from survivors of the four dour years of the Carter Presidency. No doubt the Federal Triangle would be easier to grasp if it were Brewer or Shady Hill but it is not, so I suppose it is fitting (in govamint lingo, "appropriate") that the dialogue—colloquy?—sounds as if lifted from the Congressional Record or one of Franklin W. Dixon's adventures for boys.

One final shot at the matter of unconvincing quotation. The former President himself occasionally uses it to push along his narrative, disclosing thereby his debt to Richard Nixon, and the rhetorical locution known as the Nixon Imperative. Thus, describing his decision to leave the mansion in the middle of the hostage crisis to campaign for a second term:

> During a White House briefing for community leaders on April 30, a visitor asked a pertinent question: 'Mr. President . . . in view of the most recent development in Iran, is there a chance that the people can see you, that you can be with them and you can get out in the countryside, you can get out in the states and be with us.'

Of course there is! But what's interesting is the "Mr. President" that introduces the question. Nixon did it all the time, and now Carter follows. It is as if they have to remind themselves (or us) who they are.

Negative carping. All this may be my problem, not yours and God knows not Carter's or Jordan's. Searching for evidence of life in North America, I have lately been rereading Wright Morris, Robertson Davies, Philip Roth, Updike, and Cheever. The real world in the forms of Carter and Jordan intervened, and it took me a day or two to rearrange my mind and prepare a welcome. I cannot approach these authors as either insider or political scientist. I know I can safely leave the question of how they felt about it, whatever it was, to Phil Donahue. These men are not writers, so it's beside the point to go at their work in any kind of literary context—should a used-car dealer review *Rabbit Is Rich*? Therefore, I put the novelists out of mind and read the books for important information—what did they know and when did they know it and what did they know that I didn't.

As it turns out, surprisingly little. Finishing Hamilton Jordan's book, I made a note: "Is this all there is?" And finishing the Carter book, I decided that it probably was. The newspapers seem to back me up on this. Quite a lot was made of a contretemps with Senator John Glenn on the occasion of the laying of the keel of the U.S.S. Georgia, a nuclear submarine, at Groton, Connecticut, early in 1979. Rosalynn Carter and Glenn were to make speeches at the ceremonies. Rosalynn discovers that Glenn's speech is an attack on the SALT II treaty, then in negotiation. The Carters are furious. The President writes, "That evening I dictated some additions to Rosalynn's speech, to refute what Glenn had to say, and heeded her urgent request not to call him while I was so angry." (Only in Washington do wives make "urgent requests.") In the end, Glenn modified his remarks; no harm done. Two forgotten speeches at a forgotten keel-laying in 1979, but headlines in my morning paper last September. Why? It's a trivial incident, worth only a few paragraphs in *Keeping Faith*. My guess is that it's the evidence of Presidential passion: "... while I was still so angry." This is a very sober book, one that is dutiful and comprehensive but one that discloses almost nothing about the author or his milieu.

FINISHING Carter's book, one has no grasp of context, or the connection of things to each other. This should not be surprising, given the transitional nature of the Carter Presidency; his election was an accident, brought about by public anger and frustration with bizarre and unprecedented events: Nixon, OPEC, and Vietnam, with a generous assist from the McGovern Commission, which liberalized the rules of the Democratic Party's nomination process. Jimmy Carter, so proud, so solitary, so prideful of his position as a party outsider, was a parenthesis, with scant connection to what had gone before and with only modest effect on what would come after. This book (if Nixon's memoirs read as if written at three o'clock in the morning, Carter's read as if written at three in the afternoon on a winter's day, dusk approaching and snow in the air) is not a tapestry but a monochrome, the Beige House, whose organizing principle reflects the man himself: a pious engineer.

In the Nixon tradition, Carter seems to have had little contact with outsiders. The most frequent visitors to his office were his wife, Hamilton Jordan, Senator Robert Byrd, and the Georgia lawyer, Charles Kirbo. The Carter children, with the exception of Amy, are virtually absent from the text. The White House itself seems otherworldly—air-tight, remote, and smaller than life; the Federal City might be Plains, Georgia. Except of course it isn't, as the President learned

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when the sharks began to circle his budget director, Bert Lance.

A grimly familiar White House story: an old friend becomes a member of your Administration. In the friend's background is an impropriety or the appearance of an impropriety. Word swiftly leaks to the press, all too receptive to any hint of scandal because of your conspicuous guarantees of a virtuous government. Responding to the claims of friendship, you move to the defense of your old pal. Then, when the charges refuse to go away, you move back a step. And another step. There are nightly assessments of the damage and finally everyone knows that the friend has got to go, he's become an embarrassment. Congressional hearings are ordered (in this context, Congressional hearings are normally the political equivalent of chemotherapy on the terminally ill), and now it's only a question of time. Clark Clifford is summoned. Your friend does well at the hearings, mounting a spirited defense. Your own attitudes are complicated by the recurring suspicion that your friend is telling the truth. You write in your diary:

> Most of the morning papers were fairly reasonable about Bert. I talked to Kirbo, Fritz, Ham and Jody, who unanimously feel that Bert has won a great victory and should now step down.

If that is a great victory, what would constitute a great defeat? But this is Washington, so you can write with no trace of embarrassment: "... I had no doubt that he would do what was right, for him and for me." And if they are not the same thing? But a President always believes they are.

As it happens, I find Mr. Carter's analysis of the Lance scandal persuasive. That is, it was a newspaper scandal. It should be remembered that the charges concerned Bert Lance's operations as a bank president in Georgia, his use of the firm's airplane, and bank overdrafts by members of his wife's family. In any event, nothing illegal was ever proved. In Washington, friendship is difficult always, when it is not impossible. As John F. Kennedy said, the White House is not a place to make new friends, nor, as it turns out from this story, an ideal place to maintain old ones. After the Congressional hearings, the President had a chat with his friend. Lance "had completely reversed the tide with his own superb performance. . . . but it was clear that his antagonists were not satisfied. They were regrouping for another assault. . . ." Still, Lance would not go, and finally the President told him he had to make up his mind. And he does, doing the only thing he now can do. The President has the grace to include this information:

> As I was leaving the Oval Office, LaBelle (Lance's wife) called to say that, in accepting his resignation, I had betrayed my best friend. I sympathized with her, but I was absolutely sure that Bert and I had made the right decision. When I discussed this with her much later, she reluctantly agreed.

He ends his account of the Lance affair with this laconic paragraph:

> The investigation continued for many months, and lawyers' fees incurred by the 'defendant' exceeded $1 million. No proof of illegality was ever produced. The ordeal was terrible for us all, and I am not sure what lessons were taught [sic]. I am just grateful that eventually it turned out all right, and that the Lances were strong enough in their faith not to be destroyed.

A cold judgment. Chillier still, this paragraph on the same page:

> There was some criticism of me for not firing Bert when the first charges were made. Although I considered it seriously at the beginning of September, I could not bring myself to do it. I was confinced that it was right and fair to wait for some *proof* [italics in the original] of wrongdoing before administering punishment to someone I believed to be innocent.

Somewhere in all this there's a novel, and not a comedy either.

THE HOSTAGE CRISIS consumes 150 pages of the President's book and almost all of Hamilton Jordan's, which is an account of the last year, arranged in diary form. He found himself involved in the hostage crisis almost by accident, first as a Presidential emissary to the Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos, in the effort to find a home for the Shah, second as the White House contact for Hector Villalon and Christian Bourguet, private citizens who had contacts among the revolutionaries in Teheran. This is an excerpt from the entry for April 11, 1980:

> . . . The president got right to the point. 'Gentlemen, I want you to know that I am seriously considering an attempt to rescue the hostages.'
>
> I could feel my heart speed up: *He's going to do it! He's had enough!* . . .
>
> The president said he would 'explore the rescue operations' very tentatively, that he still had a lot of questions. 'I'm going to think and pray about it over the weekend. I hope you'll do the same, and we'll get back together the first of the week.'
>
> I flew on to Atlanta, excited by the prospect of a bold and successful resolution of the crisis.

Much as a man might feel when an inner voice tells him to draw to an inside straight. In neither of these books is there a persuasive explanation of the decision to go ahead with the rescue mission. Jordan's *"he's going to do it! He's had enough!"* rings true, and perhaps it is no more than that, a desperate roll of the dice after months of frustration and disappointment, with the election around the bend. The President's book furnishes few details that I have not read elsewhere. The planning and execution of the rescue mission will be the subject of many future books, and the President himself ought to consider writing one. *Keeping Faith* is embarrassingly skimpy on matters of fact and insight into the President's state of mind. It is not an especially partisan or self-serving account—he is generous to Cyrus Vance who opposed the mission and resigned in consequence, a rare act of conscience in our government—but it throws no new light on what we already know. The President seems most concerned to make it clear that the military men on the ground opposed going forward after the multiple accidents en route to and at Desert One. But we knew that. Hamilton Jordan's account is lightweight throughout, though he appears less the bumptious, beer-drinking, wise-cracking rustic of a hundred newspaper articles than a well-meaning man of limited experience dangerously out of his depth even in this White House.

Camp David was the high point of the Carter Administration and is the most coherent section of the President's book. By the evidence here—and there is no good reason to doubt it—Jimmy Carter is a man of almost superhuman patience and tenacity. Camp David was a triumph for the President, who would not allow his advisers to overrule his instincts. He, and we, were lucky to have the large-minded Anwar Sadat as a participant. Mr. Carter has few kind words to say about Menachem Begin, so anguished, imprisoned by the past, haunted by memory, and therefore suspicious of the future. And at the end of it, after the signing ceremony and the laudatory editorials, the President realizes that he has wrought but one small step in an excruciatingly difficult hike. Sadat is isolated and Begin increasingly intransigent. The domestic

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political benefits are almost nil.

Nothing that the President does seems to yield a political benefit, and this circumstance sets the stage for the last dreadful year. On November 4, 1979, the American Embassy in Teheran is overrun. Six weeks later, the Soviets invade Afghanistan. In February the President announces that the United States will not participate in the summer Olympics in Moscow. Meanwhile, the U.N. Commission has been in and out of Iran; no results. There seems to be no functioning government in Teheran, so on April 7, Mr. Carter breaks diplomatic relations with Iran. Two weeks later the rescue mission founders in the desert, Vance resigns, and the President goes on television to praise brave men. Late in May one more boil on Job's face, Mount St. Helens, erupts. In June the Democratic Congress overrides the President's veto, killing the oil import fee, a centerpiece of the Administration's energy program.

Meanwhile, the President has been fighting and winning the primary battles with Senator Kennedy. But Kennedy won't give up and, as Carter wryly acknowledges, as soon as it is clear that he is beaten, Democratic voters rally to him in order to embarrass or punish the President. Kennedy, now truculent, brings the fight to the floor of the convention. The President delivers his spiritless acceptance speech, which is followed by the glum scene on the podium, Kennedy arriving late and refusing the hands-over-the-head gesture symbolizing party harmony:

> the news stories emphasized his lack of enthusiasm as an indication that the split in our ranks had not been healed. This accurate impression was quite damaging to our campaign and was to linger for a long time.

The remainder of the year is devoted to the campaign, "meanness," and other enduring issues; the President chats with Barbara Walters to insist that he is not mean, though campaign rhetoric has got-

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ten out of hand. He seems to agree that his hasty concession on election night—the polls had not yet closed on the West Coast and Democratic candidates were depending on a heavy vote—was a mistake, "but at the time I did not want to appear a bad loser. . . ." The theme of appearances is central to this book, and perhaps that is the trouble. It is not that Mr. Carter is uncertain of who he is and what he wants, it is that he is baffled by who we are and what we want, and that in our confusion we will mistake his motives, which are invariably pure. Jimmy Carter is not always reluctant to acknowledge error, but he is a hard man to figure out and his memoirs don't help.

WARD JUST

Ward Just is author of the recently published *In the City of Fear* (Viking), and other novels.

THE GIPPER

Reagan
by Lou Cannon

(G.P. Putnam's Sons, 432 pp., $19.95)

Few books on American politics are more needed now than a searching study of Ronald Reagan and his rise to the Presidency. One would like to know how it happened that such a man now sits in the White House—what it says about him, even more than what it says about us. Few people appear better qualified to write such an account than the White House correspondent for *The Washington Post*, Lou Cannon, who has been covering Reagan since 1966 and is the author of *Ronnie and Jesse*, a survey of Reagan's California experience. Not surprisingly, Cannon has written by far the best biography of Reagan that has yet appeared, one based not only on press stories but on his own interviews, the files of fellow reporters, the minutes of Cabinet meetings from the governorship period, Edwin Meese's Sacramento files, and Reagan's Hollywood correspondence with Jack Warner. Unhappily, it is also a book that is seriously flawed and ends with an altogether unpersuasive conclusion that serves further to mythologize Reagan, the last thing we require.

When Cannon comes to sum up what he thinks of Reagan, one can hear a fanfare of trumpets and the sweet sound of violins. He is not content with associating Reagan with F.D.R., a relationship that Reagan has been exploiting for years, but also likens him to Robert Kennedy. "Both men were authentic American heroes who dared to follow their dreams," Cannon states. "What was heroic about Reagan was that he dared and that he never stopped striving." After showing for more than four hundred pages how ill-suited Reagan is for the Presidency, Cannon writes: "He belonged in the White House. He had every right to dream heroic dreams." Cannon ends the book with a ringing affirmation:

> Whatever the judgment of historians, Reagan has made a difference. Like his hero Roosevelt, he has tried to lead the nation in the direction he thinks it should go rather than follow it in the direction he believes it to be going. Ronald Wilson Reagan has been a leader. He has not left the world the way he found it.

Yet Cannon is a scrupulous reporter, and he conscientiously sets down chapter by chapter the evidence of Reagan's shortcomings, evidence that overwhelms his conclusions. Much of his writing on the California governorship is ferocious. Reagan, Cannon asserts, "was ignorant about state government, and most of those he brought to Sacramento with him knew little more than he did." Reagan rushed to embrace "a mindless approach to budget cutting"; "the governor lied to reporters"; and after thoroughly botching the abortion question, he falsely claimed that he had been taken advantage of. Eventually, Cannon contends, Reagan became a "competent" Governor, but the few pages he offers in support of that modest judgment are not nearly so credible as the graphic material leading to a contrary assessment.

Cannon's account of Reagan's initial phase as Governor is devastating:

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In the months immediately after the election Reagan seemed more a man in a trance than one possessed by a great dream. He had campaigned against Brown's supposed profligacy but acted surprised that the state was in debt. . . . On March 14, two and one-half months after his inauguration, a reporter asked Reagan what his legislative program was and found that the governor didn't know. Looking at his aides for assistance, Reagan said, 'I could take some coaching from the sidelines, if anyone can recall my legislative program.'

Cannon has equally critical things to say about Reagan's performance in the White House, the place where Reagan "belonged." He writes:

Most of the time, President Reagan was intuitively keen but intellectually lazy. . . . He did not know how the federal budget worked or understand the threat to the environment from toxic wastes and acid rain or realize that the Soviets, for all their menace to human freedom, had in fact fulfilled a number of their treaties. . . . He did not know enough. And he did not know how much he didn't know.

With impressive thoroughness Cannon catalogues Reagan's lack of qualification for the highest post in the land.

His mind and his metaphors were locked in the past where energy was abundant, American industrial and military supremacy was axiomatic, and personal charity was the basic channel of social welfare.

Reagan's press conferences were of small value because of a "combination of poor hearing and limited knowledge"; he was impervious to information that did not square with his prejudices; and "sometimes he nodded off in important meetings."

Reagan emerges from the pages of Cannon's book an appallingly ignorant man, prone to believe any horror story about welfare Cadillacs that came his way and with little intellectual nourishment besides fast food from *Reader's Digest*. Cannon writes of the 1966 campaign:

What unnerved reporters who spent considerable time with Reagan . . . was not his misstatements but his proclivity for repeating the same memorized answers over and over again in the manner of a man who is saying them for the first time. It was as if someone had hit the 'play' button on a tape cassette recorder.

Reagan looked no better fourteen years later. In the 1980 campaign he blew a simple question about federal aid to New York City and showed he knew even less about the bill to bail out Chrysler. Can-

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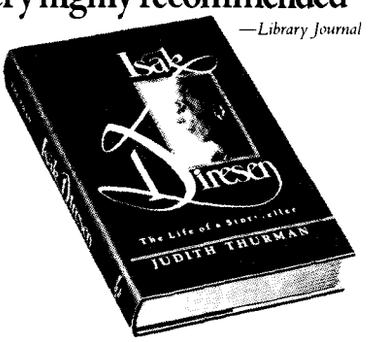

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non reminds us that in 1980 Reagan proposed to establish an office in Taipei, though this was forbidden by the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979; advocated teaching creationism in biology courses as an alternative to Darwinian theory; and associated Carter with the Ku Klux Klan, which he said had been founded in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Wrong association. Wrong town. Wrong state. But no matter. By piling mistake on mistake he was a moving target. As one of his aides later said, "'Creationism' made Reagan look like an idiot, but he got away with it."

Reagan appears from this biography to have been wrong on virtually every important question of the past generation. He called California's fair housing law "a precedent which threatens individual liberty," and said of a stand of redwoods, "There is nothing beautiful about them just that they are a little higher than the others." As Governor he was capable of telling his Cabinet, "I venture to say that there isn't anyone in the U.S. that was ever let go without medical care." An unregenerate believer in the Vietnam War, he insisted on saying as late as 1980, "It is time we recognized that ours, in truth, was a noble cause." Spiro Agnew had no stouter defender, and Reagan was championing Nixon on Watergate even in the final summer.

More unsettling than Reagan's ignorance, Cannon indicates, is the fact that the President is so impervious to information that might cause him to reconsider and so insistent on reiterating tales that are palpably untrue. Cannon notes, for example, that in 1975 Reagan asserted that segregation in the armed services had ended in World War II, and for evidence he cited a movie of Pearl Harbor showing a black messman cradling a machine gun and firing away at the Japanese. When it was pointed out to him that desegregation dated not from World War II but from Truman's 1948 executive order, he would not be budged. "I remember the scene," he said. "It was very powerful."

Yet having set down in the most painstaking, fair-minded way all of Reagan's failings, Cannon not only concludes that Reagan deserves to be in the White House but gives him very high marks on domestic policy. ("On various key defense and foreign policy issues," on the other hand, "Reagan has simply failed to do his homework," Cannon writes.) With regard to George Reedy's standard that a President "must persuade enough of his countrymen of the rightness of his decisions so that he can carry them out without destroying the fabric of society," Cannon states that "Reagan measures up . . . better than anyone since Roosevelt." Cannon goes even further.

> If one takes as a premise the notion that a public reaction against the costs of federal social programs was inevitable, Reagan *may turn out to be the salvation of the* New Deal much as his idol Franklin Roosevelt proved the savior of capitalism,

he declares. Cannon shows no awareness of all of the data casting doubt on the superficial notion that the 1980 election signaled a massive conservative trend, nor any recognition of the fact that the savior had spent three decades attempting to fuel such a reaction. One rubs one's eyes when one reads,

> He was a conservative, but one who was conserving a New Deal. Like Roosevelt, he saw himself as a force of history. Like Roosevelt, he was anathema to those whom his policies ultimately benefited most.

So it turns out that Reagan, while slashing federal funds for those who are least well off, was actually benefiting them. Or something like that.

THE DISJUNCTURE of Cannon's evidence and his conclusions has more than one explanation. In part, it derives from the fact that Cannon devotes grossly disproportionate space to obscure campaign technicians and the boys on the bus while almost totally neglecting major subjects like civil rights, and as a consequence Reagan slips away from him. (Blacks do not exist in this book.) In part, it is a consequence of Cannon's unwillingness to reach an unfavorable judgment about a man who seems so nice. (Cannon does not fail to point out, though, that Reagan could be reduced to tears by recalling that his father had been fired on Christmas Eve, then go ahead and approve mass dismissals.) In part, it is because he considerably underestimates the extent of Reagan's commitment to liberalism in the 1940s and hence does not recognize how far Reagan has moved to the right. He does not realize that Reagan was on the national board of Americans for Democratic Action, and he reports without comment Reagan's erroneous claim that he did not back Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1950

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but only the Democratic ticket. Most of all, it appears to come from the fact that Cannon, like much of the press, is bored with the liberalism of the past generation and finds Reagan's approach a welcome relief.

It is unfortunate that Cannon has been content with an inconsistent assessment of Reagan's political stature, especially since his portrait of the man is informative and perceptive. He makes clear that Reagan's life has not been as serene as his smiling countenance would suggest. His father was an alcoholic who had trouble making ends meet, and his brother remembers as a little boy having to cadge liver from the butcher for their cat. They had no cat, and fried liver was their one big meal of the week. At a time when his wife Jane Wyman was five months pregnant, he came close to dying of viral pneumonia, then went through a wrenching divorce. When he headed the Screen Actors Guild he took threats against him seriously enough to pack a gun.

CANNON shows persuasively that the stereotype of Reagan as a second-rate, down-on-his-luck actor who wandered into politics for the first time in the 1960s is badly wide of the mark. Far from being a mediocre performer confined to vehicles like *Bedtime for Bonzo*, Reagan had given an excellent account of himself in films like *The Hasty Heart* and *Voice of the Turtle*. Understandably, he voiced resentment at "this *New York Times* kind of business of referring to me as a B-picture actor." He listed for Cannon some of the people he had appeared with: James Cagney, Lionel Barrymore, Humphrey Bogart, Olivia de Havilland, Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck. Sometimes his reviews were better than theirs. Furthermore, he had been a political animal since his school days when he had been class president in high school and played an important part in a student strike in college. He did not suddenly emerge in 1964; he had been asked as far back as 1946 to run for Congress, and it had been the Democrats who had asked him. "What his opponents did not realize, and what Reagan did not acknowledge," Cannon writes, "was that he entered public life as a successful, practicing politician."

There are any number of lively bits of information. Cannon reports that when called upon to describe himself for his movie fans in the summer of 1942, Reagan said, "Mr. Norm is my alias"; one of his favorite books was *Babbitt*. Cannon scouts the notion that Reagan's second wife, Nancy, persuaded him to veer in a rightward direction, and he emphasizes instead the influence of Reagan's resentment at the steeply graduated income tax. He notes shrewdly how fortunate Reagan has always been in his enemies. The Berkeley radicals were a godsend, and Pat Brown stooped low enough to run a TV "documentary" in which he was telling a class of young pupils, "I'm running against an actor, and you know who shot Lincoln, don'tcha?" We are told that the choice of Bush as Vice Presidential candidate in 1980 was delayed because "neither of the Reagans liked him at all." And Cannon puts himself on the line by saying that Reagan will not run again.

With so much that is so good in this book, one wishes that Cannon had not been so easily satisfied, that he had married his evidence to his conclusions, and that he had helped us better to understand how it happened that out of many millions of Americans the man chosen to hold what is arguably the most powerful position in the world turned out to be Ronald Reagan.

WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG

William E. Leuchtenburg is William Rand Kenan Professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of the forthcoming *In the Shadow of FDR: The Impact of Franklin D. Roosevelt on American Presidents from Truman to Reagan* (Cornell University Press).

BRUTE AND RAW EXPERIENCE

Philosophy in the Twentieth Century by A. J. Ayer

(Random House, 283 pp., $22.50)

If Norman Mailer were to expand his essay "Advertisements for Myself" into a substantial book called *The Novel in the Twentieth Century*, it would be read because of an interest in its author rather than in its subject. One would expect less discussion of French and Russian novels than of American and English ones, useful remarks about Lawrence but not about Mann, short shrift for John Updike and André Gide, but perhaps an interesting treatment of Doris Lessing. One would not expect a scholarly book, nor an acquaintance with other critics' readings of the novels discussed. Unless one were already a Mailer fan, one would not assign the book to the innocent undergraduate as an introduction to the subject, nor recommend it to the layman who wanted some tips on what novels to read.

So it is with Ayer's book. Ayer is very good at dealing with a certain group of philosophical problems by means of a certain repertoire of tactics. Most of his book is about philosophers who discuss the same or related problems with the aid of similar tactics. He has little patience for people who do not take his favorite problems seriously, nor with those whose whole philosophical strategy is different from his own. So he includes long discussions of rather picky little points in C. I. Lewis and C. D. Broad, because these writers said something almost, but not quite, like what Ayer thinks should be said about sensation and perception. By contrast, John Dewey and Wilfrid Sellers, who criticized the whole idea of "sensory givenness," are never mentioned. Nor are Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, and Mary Hesse—philosophers who have cast doubt on the description of empirical science that Ayer takes for granted. A whole chapter—about one-tenth of the book—is devoted to R.G. Collingwood, but it is hard to see why. The chapter makes Collingwood sound so muddleheaded and pointless that he seems to have been brought on stage only to be beaten about the head with balloons. Heidegger is dismissed in six polemical pages, and Saul Kripke in two. There are short, snappy "refutations" of single arguments offered by Donald Davidson and Hilary Putnam, but no serious discussion of the motives and strategy of their work. (In the case of

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Davidson, the refutation consists of saying that it is "clear" that, rather than accepting his conclusion, one should deny one or another of his premises.) Willard Quine and Wittgenstein are treated with grudging respect, but not in enough detail to give the reader any clear idea of their positions, nor of the reasons for their enormous influence. No reference is made to Jacques Derrida or Michel Foucault or Hans-Georg Gadamer or Jurgen Habermas. Maurice Merleau-Ponty is the only non-Anglo-Saxon figure outside the "analytic" movement to be given serious consideration, and then only because, like Broad, he said some things about perception that Ayer wishes to confute.

THERE IS, to be sure, no single volume, and probably never will be one, which does the job suggested by Ayer's title. Philosophy in our century has been a highly "national" subject, and all that one can reasonably expect of a history of philosophy in this period is an account of what was written in one or two languages. Somebody who wants a balanced and fair survey of Anglo-American twentieth-century philosophical thought should read the second edition of John Passmore's *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*. Developments in some other regions are covered by Rüdiger Bubner's enlightening *Modern German Philosophy* and Vincent Descombes's fascinating *Modern French Philosophy*. These are books that construct a narrative that the untutored reader can follow with interest. Ayer, alas, does not try to do that. He does not bother to make his transitions natural and easy, nor to explain his choice of emphases. It is hard to see what audience he envisaged.

The result is a book that, though graceful in style, demands considerable patience and sympathy from its readers. Nevertheless, it has the virtues of its vices. Ayer says that it "was originally conceived as a sequel to Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*." That book has frequently been written off as a mere potboiler. It is, to be sure, impressionistic and unscholarly. But it is an interesting book nevertheless, because it lets one see just why Russell felt able to disregard so much of the philosophical tradition. Russell defended the book against its critics by saying, rightly, that "a man without bias cannot write interesting history." Like Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Russell's book presented the previous millenia as filled with confusions and half-truths that had finally been resolved, or placed in their proper context, in the writings of the author and his friends. Ayer thinks that the problems upon which Russell focused are the proper questions for philosophers to discuss, and his book helps one see how the contemporary philosophical scene looks to somebody who still holds that view.

To see what that view amounts to, it helps to remember that Ayer's equivalent of *The Naked and The Dead* was *Language, Truth and Logic*—a brilliant summary of, roughly, the views common to Bertrand Russell and Rudolf Carnap. Ayer published this in 1936, at the age of twenty-five. Russell, who was the Hemingway to Ayer's Mailer, said that he wished he had written it himself. Many have wished the same. Ayer's synopsis of what came to be called "logical positivism" may be the best presentation of a philosophical system ever composed. It must by now have been assigned to some half-million students, for even philosophers who despise its doctrines are in awe of its expository skill.

The central thesis of logical positivism was that the history of philosophy was mostly muddle. Those half-million who were assigned Ayer probably remember best the claims that necessary truths (e.g., of mathematics) are true by virtue of the "rules of our language," that philosophy consists in the discovery of such rules, and that these rules dictate that metaphysical theories and moral principles are "meaningless" because "unverifiable." These ex-students may be relieved to know that the vast majority of "analytic philosophers"—the heirs of the logical positivists—repudiate all three claims. Quine convinced most of us that there was no way to tell the difference between a platitude grounded in "experience" and a "linguistic convention," and thus no point in making the distinction. There was thus no way to draw a line between philosophy as "logical analysis" and the "empirical discoveries" of common sense and of science. Quine, Wittgenstein, Sellars, Kuhn, and others cast enough doubt on the idea that attaching a meaning to a sentence requires knowing what sensations would confirm or disconfirm it so that nobody now uses "meaningless" as a term of philosophical abuse.

But Ayer is right to complain (as he did in his autobiography, *Part of My Life*) that the latest generation of "post-positivistic" analytic philosophers is still taking something rather like the positivists' "verifiability theory of meaningfulness" for granted:

> The attitude of many philosophers towards it [that theory] reminds me of the relation between Pip and Magwitch in Dicken's *Great Expectations*. They have lived on the money, but are ashamed to acknowledge its source.

This disingenuousness is exemplified by the fact that, although the mockery of philosophers like Hegel and Heidegger in *Language, Truth and Logic* rested squarely on the verifiability theory, today's analytic philosophers keep the mockery while supposedly dropping the theory. It is very important for the self-image of analytic philosophy to keep this mockery going—to agree with Ayer that even though the theses of the Vienna Circle are in tatters, its spirit survives in "the banishment of what I can best describe as a strain of woolly uplift from philosophy." One example of this survival is that, although Ayer's cavalier treatment of Kripke will exasperate many of his colleagues, most of them will probably think his superficial and inaccurate account of Heidegger no more than the man deserves. This is a pity. Kripke is well able to take care of himself, but Heidegger should not be treated like a dead dog. His writings, like those of Hegel and of Russell, represent one of the impressive moments of the European imagination.

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY's continuing putdown of uplift has by now become so very woolly that it amounts to little more than an expression of group solidarity, without even the pretense of theoretical back-up. Post-positivistic analytic philosophers are at one with Ayer when he regrets William James's

> tendency to look upon philosophy as expressing some general attitude towards the world rather than as seeking, and if possible advancing, the correct solutions to a special set of problems.

But what is of interest in Ayer, and in what remains of the intellectual movement of which logical positivism used to be the spearhead, is itself just a "general attitude towards the world"—empiricism as a quasi-moral outlook. To be an old-fashioned empiricist of the sort Ayer is proud to be is to take seriously the notion of direct contact with reality in the form of naked, brute, raw experience. Kant and Hegel, in different ways, per-

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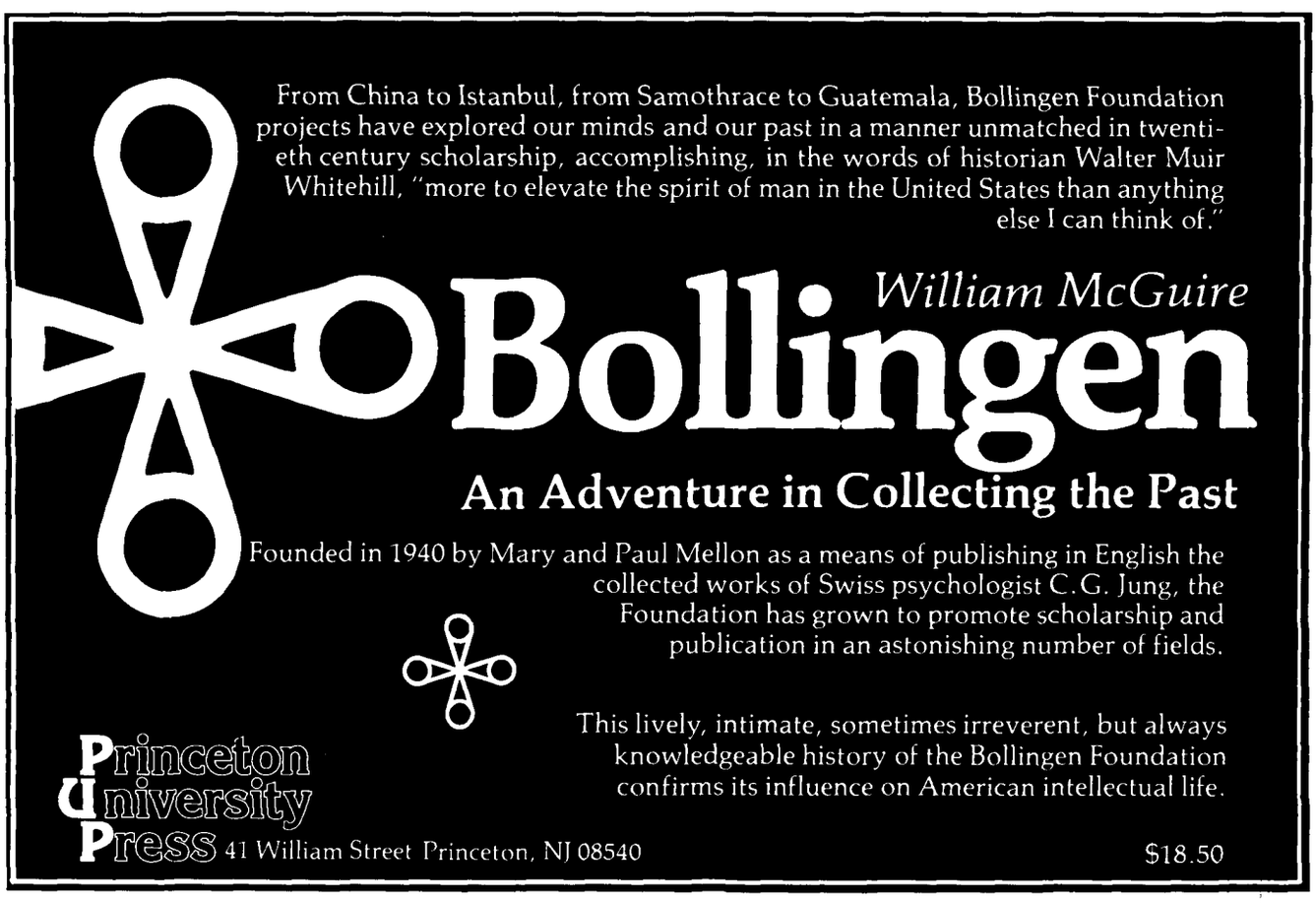
suaded most subsequent German and French philosophers that the idea of such contact was a sort of primitive nature-mysticism. But English philosophers have tended to ignore Hegel's insistence that linguistic mediation goes all the way down. They like to think that they have avoided getting lost in a web of words, unlike those more verbose people across the Channel. They pride themselves on a robust, manly concern with sensory perception, on their ability to strip away all conceptual or linguistic disguises and look at experience bare. Nietzsche, discussing Mill's utilitarianism, said, "Not all men live for pleasure; only Englishmen do." Similarly, not all philosophers discuss whether it is safe to go beyond sense-data to tables and chairs, but most of those who do speak English.

Though Ayer is no longer a logical positivist, he ends his book by reiterating that he remains, like Russell, an "old-fashioned empiricist." He thinks that the gap between raw sensuous feels and tables and chairs is a problem that is patent to anyone whose brain has not been muddied by Hegelianism and its coherentist view that objectivity is just inter-subjectivity. He would like philosophers to keep trying to solve the problems created by this gap. To his critics, this insistence seems merely ideological. They cannot grasp what Ayer calls "the problem of objectivity," viz., "whether it is possible for us to describe things as they really are, independently of their relation to ourselves." They think that trying to get behind human languages and societies to things in themselves is pointless, and they do not know what to make of the idea of relating to things independently of their relations to us. But for Ayer such maneuvers cannot evade the "scientific" fact that there is a gap between the way things are and the deliverances of sense. He takes this purported upshot of physiological research to be confirmed by that fact that

> our ordinary perceptual judgments embody inferences, in the sense that they go beyond any mere description of the contents of the experiences on which they are based.

Thomas Reid, writing against Hume in the 1780s, and J. L. Austin, writing against Ayer in the 1950s, had a lot of fun at the expense of the idea that we might peep back behind our judgments to "the experiences on which they are based." Unless one can do just that, a lot of the problems whose discussion Ayer takes to constitute sound, nonwoolly, philosophy, vanish. Reid and Austin pointed out that you can just skip the "experiences" and treat the perceptual judgments as direct responses to the world, thus eliminating possibly dishonest middlemen. This leaves you, of course, without any touchstone for knowledge, with just the ordinary justificatory practices of common sense, and of the scientists, the moralists, and the theologians. But that was fine with Austin and Reid.

It is not fine with Ayer. As a good, old-fashioned empiricist he thinks that any philosophical view that ignores our pure, brute, unmediated, nonconceptual, nonlinguistic, encounters with reality is a betrayal of everything Russell stood for, everything that makes philosophy worth doing. Nothing pains him more than to see a fellow empiricist (e.g., Otto Neurath) gradually succumb to the subtle wiles of the Coherence Theory of Truth, a view that skips the experiences and doesn't worry about which of one's perceptual reports (e.g., "It's red!," "It hurts!," "It's a bird!," "It's a plane!") are "direct reports of the sensory given." Some of Ayer's sharpest words are reserved for philosophers (such as J. J. C. Smart and David Armstrong) who ignore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raw experience in favor of judgments. Thus when Smart urges that "This is red" does not get its meaning by giving a name to a feel, but rather "means something like 'A normal percipient would not easily pick this out of a clump of geranium petals, though he would pick it out of a clump of lettuce leaves,' " Ayer tells him that he is "merely disingenuous," for

> I do not judge my scarf to be red because I associate it with geranium petals rather than lettuce leaves. I associate it with geranium petals rather than with lettuce leaves, because the lettuce leaves look green to me and the geranium petals and the scarf look red.

This may seem to verge on a Monty Python routine, but Ayer is dead serious. It is difficult, however, for him to back up his earnestness with argument. "Merely disingenuous" is strong talk, but what can somebody in Ayer's position do save resort to invective? What empirical research, what "analysis of meanings," could show that the geraniums, or the redness, comes first? If there were ever an example of what the young Ayer used to scorn as a "metaphysical" quibble, one that no future series of observations could hope to settle, surely it is this quarrel about the relative epistemological priority of the geranium and its color. Ayer intuits the priority of redness. Smart ingenuously eschews intuition and rests his case on the number of traditional, unsettleable, philosophical problems that can be dissolved if one takes his view of the matter. Ayer insists that these philosophical problems must, at all costs, be saved from dissolution. So the forever irresolvable argument goes on. But it was just such interminable arguing over conflicting intuitions from which the young Ayer thought to save us.

IN FACT, however, nothing will ever save philosophy from being the verbal expression of conflicting intuitions about what is important. Philosophy without such intuitions—philosophy that is *not* the expression of "some general attitude towards the world"—is mere scholasticism. What is of interest about Russell and Ayer is not their answers to questions about redness and geraniums, but their attempt to put the empiricist sense of the human situation into words. Analogously, what is important about Mailer and Hemingway is their attempt to put into words their sense of the difficulty of being a male. It may be pretty much the same sense in both cases. The Hemingway-Mailer insistence on punching people out is a lot like the empiricist insistence on the brute immediacy of redness. (It is almost always, incidentally, redness. That and pain are the standard empiricist examples of confronting reality—rarely blueness or joy. Austin atypically used magenta as an example, but that was thought a bit off-color.)

Mailer and Hemingway are out of fashion these days. The appetite for well-cooked intertextuality that has succeeded the taste for raw, socko, experience has influenced both literary and philosophical judgments. Similarly, Hegel (with the revolt against whom Ayer begins his story) is coming back in again, and Russell is going out. But this will not last forever. The Hegelian preference for linguistic mediation and historicist relativity is bound, someday, to be succeeded by another celebration of contact with naked nature—with "things independent of their relation to ourselves."

Ayer displays, at various places in his book, a truculent awareness of this shift in philosophical fashion, though he does not discuss it explicitly. He clearly feels that the times are out of joint, and he would like to clear Russell's wounded name. He ended the first volume of his (as yet uncompleted) autobiography by saying that "if I could be thought to have played Horatio to Russell's Hamlet, I should consider it glory enough." Even those of us who see as little point in Russell's philosophical strategy as Ayer sees in Hegel's can sympathize, and can see Russell as an heroic figure. One could do much worse than spend one's life emulating and defending such a man. In any case, Ayer's emulation has won him the role he sought. When Russell next comes on the stage, so will Ayer.

RICHARD RORTY

Richard Rorty is Kenan Professor of Humanities at the University of Virginia. His book, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, was recently published by the University of Minnesota Press.

AVIGNON AT WAR

Constance; or Solitary Practices by Lawrence Durrell

(Viking, 393 pp., $15.95)

Lawrence Durrell refers to his current project of five interconnected novels—of which *Constance* is the third and latest—as a "quincunx." He might more aptly call it the Avignon Quintet. The fact that he has avoided doing so, and thereby forestalled associations with the Alexandria Quartet, seems significant.

The Alexandria Quartet is arguably his finest work, and certainly his most popular. With its labyrinthine twists of plot, its unexpected facets catching light from constantly changing angles, it has remained fresh and original for over twenty years. Who wouldn't long to repeat such a feat? The Avignon books, however, rely for their surprises upon trickery. It's the reader who is tricked, and readers are not a forgiving lot.

What we accepted in the first volume, *Monsieur*, was revealed toward its conclusion to be deception—not the interesting kind of deception practiced by true-to-life characters but the self-conscious, cerebral deception practiced by a writer pulling strings. It was as if, having created a successful illusion, Durrell could not resist showing how he'd done it. "Ha! Had you fooled, didn't I?" he says.

Livia, the second book, abandoned all pretense of verisimilitude and played throughout with questions of art versus reality. Were we intrigued by references to Pia in *Monsieur*? Well, there is no Pia. "It was cunning of you to make Pia a composite of Constance and Livia," a writer named Sutcliffe says in *Livia*. Sutcliffe is speaking to another writer, Blanford, who wrote a book called *Monsieur*. Blanford, by the way, has embarked upon a cluster of novels he refers to as a quincunx. This is something like those Quaker Oats boxes where the Quaker holds up an oats box that pictures a Quaker holding up an oats box, and so on into infinity.

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After the intricate confusions of *Livia* —an annoying, tedious, and insulting book—it's a relief to find that *Constance* returns to a more accepted form of storytelling. Its story is that of Avignon at war—beginning with the last idyllic summer before the Nazi Occupation, ending with the ringing of the bells to signal the return of peace.

Writers still have a disconcerting way of turning up as characters here, meeting other writers whom they have invented and who are therefore characters once removed—the characters' characters, so to speak. The reader, like a slapped child, has trouble resuming his trustfulness and believing in what he's told. But it's a straightforward story, nonetheless. Constance, a loyal and kindhearted young woman, loses her new husband to a freak military accident, stays on in Avignon with the Red Cross during the Occupation, and combines her voice with a few others to deliver a sort of tone poem on the atmosphere in France during World War II. These voices give us a sense of the helplessness and despair experienced by the French in the presence of the Germans. They also bear chilling witness to the French complicity in the rounding up of Jews.

> He had thought at first that the French were simply hostages to fortune, forced to do the bidding of the invaders; he had been disillusioned and disgusted to discover that, on the contrary, quite a number were active anti-semites at heart and only too glad to assist in the persecution of this gifted and ill-fated tribe. He had heard stories of the French concentration camps which froze his blood with indignation and horror—places with such poetical names as Rivesaltes and Argeles, as Noe and Recebedou in the Haute Garonne; but nearest of all was the camp of Gurs in the Pyrenees, which had become a byword for its open brutalities. He became quite pale as he retailed these stories to Constance.

There are flaws in *Constance*. One is the occasional lapse of ear. Words or sounds are repeated, as if the author had not thought of aural effect:

> Poor Blanford had even gone so far as to get her a ring—she had allowed it to get to this point.

> Where might they all be now? Dead for all I knew. And the most painful evocation of all, that of Livia.

Even more of a problem is the point of one is first grateful for the luxurious variety, then baffled, finally discouraged. "Here in this peaceful decor had walked Goethe and Eckermann of whom [Fischer] had never heard," we are told. If we are solely with Fischer at this moment (and we are), looking through his eyes alone, how do we ourselves know there was a Goethe or an Eckermann? And there's the following, which is a prime example of the difficulties presented to the average weary reader:

> Constance's heart beat faster as she saw that the car, after crossing the bridge, took the curving narrow country roads which led through the foothills towards the villa where once Lord Galen had held court. . . . It had been taken over for the nonce as the General's residence, as well as the senior officers' mess—an arrangement which suited [the General] not at all, and made him feel more than ever slighted by the Party. He felt as if he were a sort of local concierge, for he alone lodged there, but he was forced to eat and drink and fraternise with a crew of senior Waffen S.S. officers. . . .

During the very long passage that ensues, discussing the General's mood in exhaustive detail, we're unable to concentrate fully because we keep wondering whatever happened to Constance. There she was, at the start of the selfsame paragraph, with her heart beating faster. And here's the General—not only a different character but an entirely different side in the war—and Constance appears to have vanished.

Is this to say that the novel fails? No, not completely; for it's hard to imagine any work of Durrell's that is not ringingly evocative, full of character and possibility. There is always a sense of richness in his writing. Textures, smells, and sights tumble forth; he is a master at setting the scene. *Constance* carries enough conviction so that when, toward the end of the war, a woman proposes a trip around the world and a man asks, "What world?" we nod in agreement. We can bear witness to the desolation, the waste and hopelessness we've so palpably experienced during the course of the story.

This is a troublesome and often exasperating book, but it is above all else a book with a wealth of atmosphere, and in spite of its pretensions that atmosphere comes through with resounding clarity.

ANNE TYLER

Anne Tyler, a contributing editor to TNR, is the author most recently of *Dinner at The Homesick Restaurant* (Knopf).

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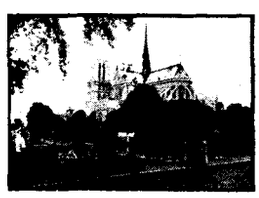

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THE GENESIS OF A SNOB

Charles Ryder's Schooldays and Other Stories by Evelyn Waugh

(Little, Brown, 292 pp., $12.95)

Nobody would argue that vintage Waugh lurks in any of his short stories or that we meet there anything like the magisterial wit of *A Handful of Dust*, *Ninety-Two Days*, or *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*. Short forms tempt Waugh toward his melodramatic, schoolboy-rag side—he needs more room to develop nuance and the appearance of sympathy with his characters. Still, this is a worthwhile collection of short pieces if not a startling one, eleven of the twelve stories having first appeared in book form as far back as 1936. Of the twelfth, the pretext for this re-issue, more below.

Twelve stories for $12.95, plus tax. It works out to about $1.13 per story, certainly moderate as reading matter goes today, what with *Harper's* and *The Atlantic* costing $2.00; *Time*, *Newsweek*, and TNR itself $1.50. But even Waugh's most frantic admirers would have to admit that some of these stories are worth less than $1.13. "Cruise" ("Letters from a Young Lady of Leisure"), with its repeated tag-line "Goodness how sad," I'd rate at about 35 cents. On the other hand, some of these stories are worth more than $1.13. "Mr. Loveday's Little Outing," despite the crudity of the irony, is a valuable ($2.75?) enactment of the theme that the violent and irrational are often housed quite comfortably within the benign and the reasonable. "Excursion in Reality," a satire on the philistine stupidities of filmmaking, probably seemed funnier in 1932 than now, but it's still worth about $2.00. "Bella Fleace Gave a Party" is right up there too, almost unbearably wrenching with its intermingling of wit and pathos. "Winner Takes All," about a meddling mother's arranging things so that her elder son triumphs in all ways over her younger, thus paying homage to the sacred tradition of British primogeniture snobbery, is another valuable bit of irony, worth well over $1.13. In this story, Gervase, Mrs. Kent-Cumberland's first son, gets all the gravy, despite the presence of the second son, Tom, whose misfortunes are foreshadowed by his being delivered, unlike his brother, by a physician suffering the stigma of "a middle-class accent." For Tom, things go downhill from that point. A toy auto intended to be his present from an uncle is redesignated Gervase's by his mother, for reasons that strike her as perfectly obvious: "This can't have been meant for Tom. Why, it must have cost six or seven pounds." Tom discovers a manuscript journal of a relative who served with Wellington and decides to edit and publish it. He does this job so well that he finds Gervase's name displacing his own on the title-page. And so on. The symmetry of the situation makes it a bit farcical, but still it's touching, and it's hard to read the story without wondering how deeply Waugh himself, as a younger son, suffered in this way.

Another valuable piece of goods is the Saki-like "On Guard," largely about Millicent Blade's boyish nose, the feature all suitors fall for, but less because it's hers and cute than because it's like the noses of the younger boys they used to love at school. Millicent had

> a nose to take the thoughts of English manhood back to its schooldays, to the doughy-faced urchins on whom it had squandered its first affection, to memories of changing room and chapel and battered straw boaters.

Contemplating Millie's nose, her admirer Hector hears "Play up, play up" and smells "crumpets being toasted over a gas-ring in his study." This story is a brilliant and thoroughly honest depiction of an important truth—that when a public-school Englishman loves and marries a woman, he's likely to do so because she reminds him of some kid he used to love at school. It's like Charles Ryder's "thing" about Sebastian Flyte. No wonder so much elegiac nostalgia attaches to the British understanding of "schooldays."

And what about the title story? Exhumed from the Waugh archives at Austin, Texas, and published last March in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Michael Sissons, it's the first chapter (titled originally "Ryder by Gaslight") of a novel Waugh wisely abandoned. As comparison with Waugh's autobiography *A Little Learning* suggests, the fiction here is too close to an autobiographical transcript of actuality; it's full of attractive texture but weak in action, plot, and significance. But although not worth $1.13, it has some interest because it's another one of Waugh's stabs at his lifelong theme, in which the worthy junior (younger brother, or junior officer) is shafted by the convention that elders or seniors, no matter how undeserving, get the goodies. Evelyn's older brother Alec is never mentioned, but we infer that he figures somehow.

Like an unlikely labor picket of the 1930s, "Unfair!" is Evelyn Waugh's cry. In "Charles Ryder's Schooldays," a boy named O'Malley is appointed to a school post Ryder himself thinks he's earned and has been counting on. The master's explanation strikes him (and perhaps us) as lame:

> 'I wonder if I can make you understand why I put him over you. You were the obvious man in many ways. The thing is, some people *need* authority, others don't. You've got plenty of personality. O'Malley isn't at all sure of himself. He might easily develop into rather a second-rater. . . . Do you understand?'
>
> 'I understand what you mean, sir.'

THESE STORIES are a handy reminder that Waugh's reputation as a social snob may need reconsidering, no matter how badly such a second look might unsettle uncritical celebrators of *Brideshead Revisited*. If in that overripe fantasy, manufactured in the grim 1940s, he seems at pains to register his worshipful intimacy with the aristocracy, in these stories of the 1930s he exhibits for the unearned-income set an intellectual and moral disdain hard to distinguish from that of a contemporary Marxist-Leninist. If he'd conceived Sebastian Flyte in 1935, he'd have had little trouble discerning from the start the selfishness, cruelty, and fatuity behind those expensive good looks. In "Mr. Loveday's Little Outing," the person who gets the apparently harmless Mr. Loveday released from the lunatic asylum (whereupon he immediately strangles a girl) is Angela, a representative of the upper orders. There's no reason in the logic of the story why she should be an aristocrat. Waugh makes her one solely to suggest the dangerous susceptibility of that class to willful, sentimental, silly impulses, which superior station provides the freedom to gratify. In the alternative ending to *A Handful of Dust*—included in this book as if it were a

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short story—Tony and Brenda Last, ruined by money, go on as before, she adulterously in the country, he adulterously in a new London flat. In "Cruise" the young lady "of leisure" writing home from her costly pleasure trip is characterized not just as a social ninny but as a rich and therefore dangerous illiterate unable to read, spell, or punctuate. No one comes to Bella Fleace's elaborate party because she's forgotten to mail the invitations, and she's forgotten to mail them because she's a scatter-brained aristocrat, yes-womaned on all sides, who doesn't notice that her senility has reduced her now to equality with any other forgetful old lady. Despite their sometimes dubious success as art, these stories do convey the valuable news that if Waugh ended as something like a snob, he didn't at all begin that way.

PAUL FUSSELL

Paul Fussell, a contributing editor to TNR, is the author most recently of *The Boy Scout Handbook and Other Observations* (Oxford University Press).

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

America, and for each of them there are ten more in whom our "future shock" world has alienated and destroyed any sense of community. We try to cope, us lowly public school teachers.

We ask public schools to solve all of our social problems: nutrition, health, handicapped mainstreaming, social mobility, and racism. Private schools do not carry such an awesome burden.

Just one more comment on statistics—a little math lesson. Take one "regular classroom" teacher with forty students, and one "special education" teacher with ten students. Now figure out the student-teacher ratio. Did you get twenty-five students for each teacher? Good. Thirty years ago special education and remedial programs were almost unheard of. I always teach my students to be supremely careful with the use of statistics.

Phil, there's a lot you don't know. Climb on down from your ivory tower and come to the school I run. You're badly in need of a good public education.

ELLEN CLARY
Woodruff Hospital
Cleveland, Ohio

TRB, *from page 6*

personal, it appears, judging by the first week's experience. In a bold, slow tone, the individual names were read in a chapel in Washington's National Cathedral, one of the ceremonies that took place to honor those who served in Vietnam. It took three days, one thousand names an hour, with only a few hours off each morning. At the memorial itself volunteers have books telling where individual names can be located. Small flags flutter at the base; at some spots a family has placed a wreath. One reads, "SP/4 Peter Lopez, A True American Hero, Eddie, Danny, Rosie, Lizbel, Mable, Mom and Dad: We miss you."

One man points at the name of Jose P. Ramos and his friend takes the picture. There is a search for names, and it will be hard to keep the place clear of trivia all saying the same thing: this is not a name, it is a person. My friend tells me of Larry Stevens (Panel No. 32-west, line 33). They chatted on an A-4 Skyhawk off the U.S.S. Coral Sea; the next day Stevens was missing. Now he is here, like those long lines of little stones in Arlington National Cemetery across the Potomac.

Some have said they think the memorial is too negative; perhaps they have spoken before seeing its powerful effect on visitors. Crowds increased each day at the memorial ceremonies. Officials agreed to add a conventional sculpture of three soldiers next year. They can do nothing, I think, to increase its impressiveness.

This was the war that marked America's coming of age. We had never lost a war before—America could not lose one! And yet we did, and the American Ambassador ignominiously flew off the roof of the United States embassy. The Indochina war lasted through the Administrations of five Presidents, Roosevelt through Johnson (who was destroyed by the Tet offensive). In effect the Presidents were seeking stalemate, not an all-out military victory. But how can you achieve stalemate in what is, essentially, a civil war? The escalation of involvement centered on how to contain Communism in Vietnam.

We are still trying to contain something. President Reagan, flying about the country, is hard at it. Keep the Russians from getting pipeline supplies, shut off their trade where possible (but sell them U.S. grain), continue the missile buildup. It is still agonizingly difficult to draw the line.

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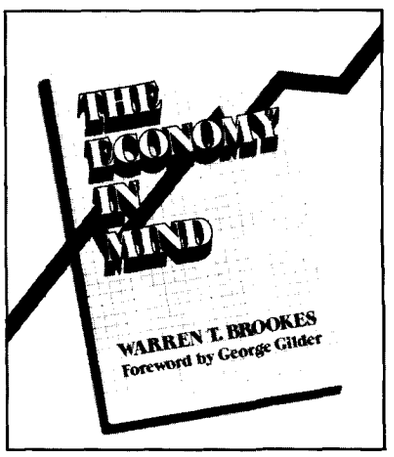

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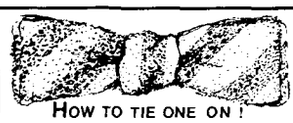
Men  Bowties

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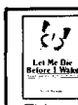

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Los Angeles Diarist

My First Time

AS I WAS LEAVING the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles last Saturday night, a woman leaped out of a cab and collapsed in my arms, weeping bitterly because Menachem Begin was dead. She was not a Revisionist, she was a reporter; and she had rushed over to Mr. Begin's hotel when she sensed that something was wrong. "I can't take this job anymore," she sobbed. "It's too much." She had missed the official announcement to the press by twenty minutes, and was trembling because everybody else had already filed. And she was trembling, too, because this was not the first time that fate had caught up with somebody to whom she'd been assigned. She feared that she was jinxed, which is almost as deadly for a reporter as for a croupier. Her misgivings suddenly made me think that maybe she had the wrong story. "Lois," I asked, "who exactly do you think is dead?" "Begin, of course." "No, not Begin. *Mrs.* Begin." "Thank God!" A new dawn had risen. He was alive. It wasn't even her story. We rushed up to her telex machine to file the few facts for which she was mercifully responsible. "The death of any human being is terrible," she observed, slamming the keys, "but the most terrible is the death of a human being that I'm covering." I suggested to Lois, who works for a great metropolitan newspaper, that there was something unwholesome about her recent swings in mood, and she promised to consider this just as soon as the screen on her machine cleared. It did a few minutes later, but by then she was saying that she does her best work under pressure. The Prime Minister had already left Los Angeles, and we agreed to a drink.

WE HAD BOTH ARRIVED the day before on Mr. Begin's plane. He was to address the Jews in Los Angeles and the Southern Baptists in Dallas, and thirty reporters were with him. It was my first time, as Campari says, and maybe my last. I went half as a Zionist and half as an anthropologist. Menachem Begin has kept me away from my garden a lot since 1977; it was time to meet the man. In Dallas he was to receive an award from the Reverend Jerry Falwell and the Reverend Bailey Smith. The anthropologist in me rejoiced, but the Zionist did not. Dallas would be the latest in a long string of humiliations that Menachem Begin has visited upon Israel. A senior Israeli official insisted that it is "the classical policy of the Israeli government to accede to invitations by people who describe themselves as friends of Israel," and he explained: "We should be supportive of any group that is supportive of Israel on the question of support for Israel." I wished he would explain his explanation. The official also seemed unaware that the new right's streak in American politics is coming to an end. But Dallas never happened, and even some of the loyalists at the annual convention of the Council of Jewish Federations seemed relieved.

WHEN THE PLANE landed in the bright Italianate light of Los Angeles, the Prime Minister was greeted by Jerry Brown and Tom Bradley, the two most lugubrious men in town. (The Prime Minister's staff appeared to have scheduled a lot of losers.) Jerry Brown greeted Mr. Begin by invoking "the very special relationship between California and Israel," which provoked some speculation in the crowd. And then Mr. Begin stepped up to the mike. It was the only time that the boys and girls on the bus would see him. It was also the first time I laid eyes on him, and the impression was one of unrelieved rigidity. I mean of physical rigidity; his recent injuries seemed to have stiffened his frame, and the dark wooden cane added to the image of utter uprightness. It confirmed what I had long felt about this man—that the most important part of his body was his spine. He showed no emotion, and stared stonily into space. He received the key to the city, offered his thanks, and said something nice about the "Christian friends" he would see in a few days. He was, in short, what I expected: an unlively man, ideologically estranged from spontaneity, experiencing always his own rectitude; and his physical condition was the perfect symbol of his spiritual condition.

THAT WAS ALL I saw of him. He went to his hotel for *Shabbes*, and immediately after sunset on Saturday night his press adviser summoned us to a corner of the lobby to say that Mrs. Begin was dead and everything was off. I did see a lot of reporters, though, and I can't say that I came away wanting to sign up. There were exceptions, to be sure. Gershon Jacobson, the editor of the *Allgemeine Journal*, the only Yiddish weekly paper in America, won my admiration when he told me that in the 1960s he covered the Newark riots for TNR in a beard and a yarmulke; he was also full of news from the world of the rabbis, a world I have almost lost. He told me, for example, that a prominent rabbi in Boston (but not the most prominent rabbi in Boston) has ruled that the commission of inquiry into the Beirut massacre contradicts the Talmud. David Rubinger of *Time*, a gifted photographer and a wakeful man, offered some interesting observations on the uglier aspects of present Israeli politics. But there was not much else that these journalists gave me to think about, except that they gave me not much to think about. I engaged a TV correspondent in a conversation about the intellectual requirements of journalism, which I argued should be considerable. He nervously agreed, and adduced his own efforts to acquire a knowledge of history. Before he left for the hostage crisis in Tehran, he recalled, he read what he could find, and "by the time I got to the Iranian revolution I was really exhausted." I believed him.

I WAS IN L.A. with a little time on my hands, which was fine; I could have a short bout of glitz before catching the redeye back to liberalism. And I could see Marie Syrkin, whose apartment near the sea is a sanctuary of seriousness in the People's Republic of Santa Monica. Still, I owed my editors a story, so I thought to mill around a bit at the gathering where Mr. Begin was to speak, and talk to the Jews there about the state of their union. Lois came along, and we arrived at the Bonaventure Hotel in time to see the anti-Begin demonstrations skulk away; the Palestinians outside seemed even more disappointed by Mr. Begin's absence than the Jews inside. We didn't get much from the Jews—they had been discussing themselves for a whole week and they were tired. We did run into Pete Wilson, California's Senator-elect. I can report that he is fit for the job. When we asked for his views on the recent events in the Middle East, he expressed his "enormous admiration for Aliza Begin." The poor woman. She never knew.

L.W.

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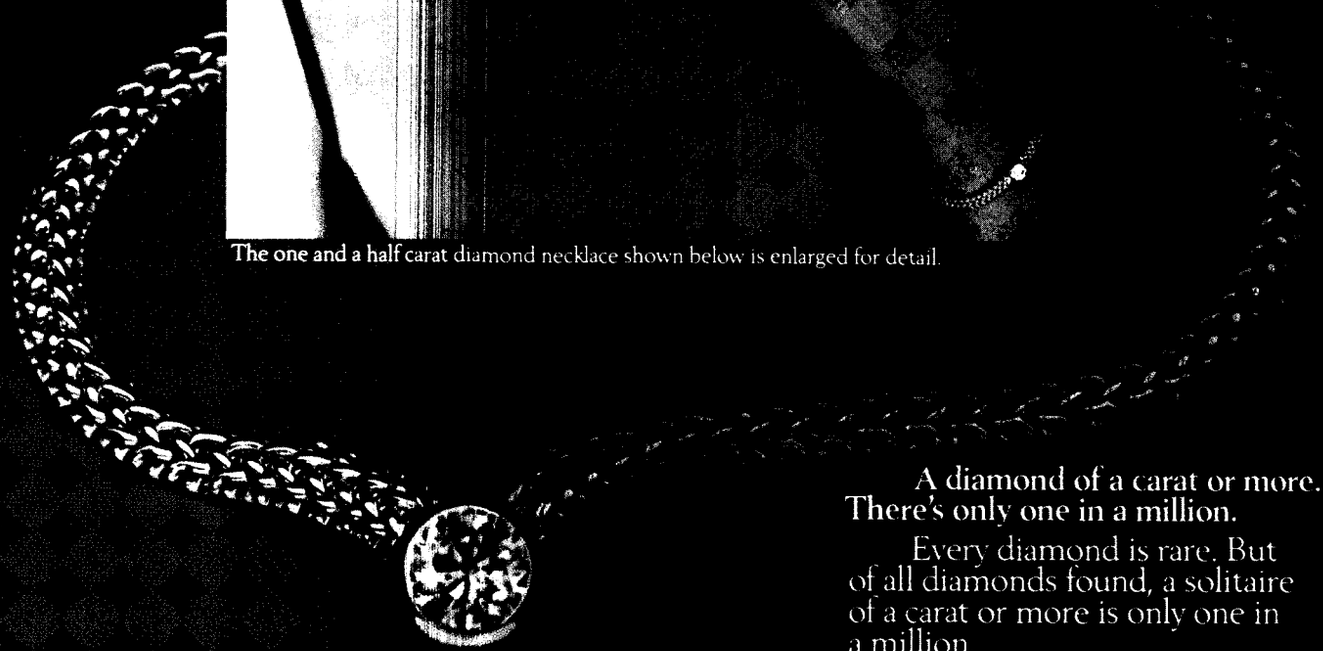

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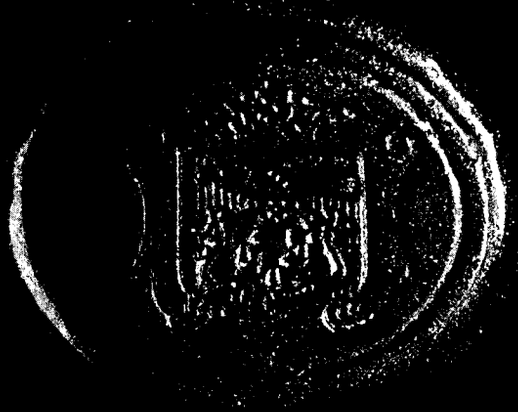

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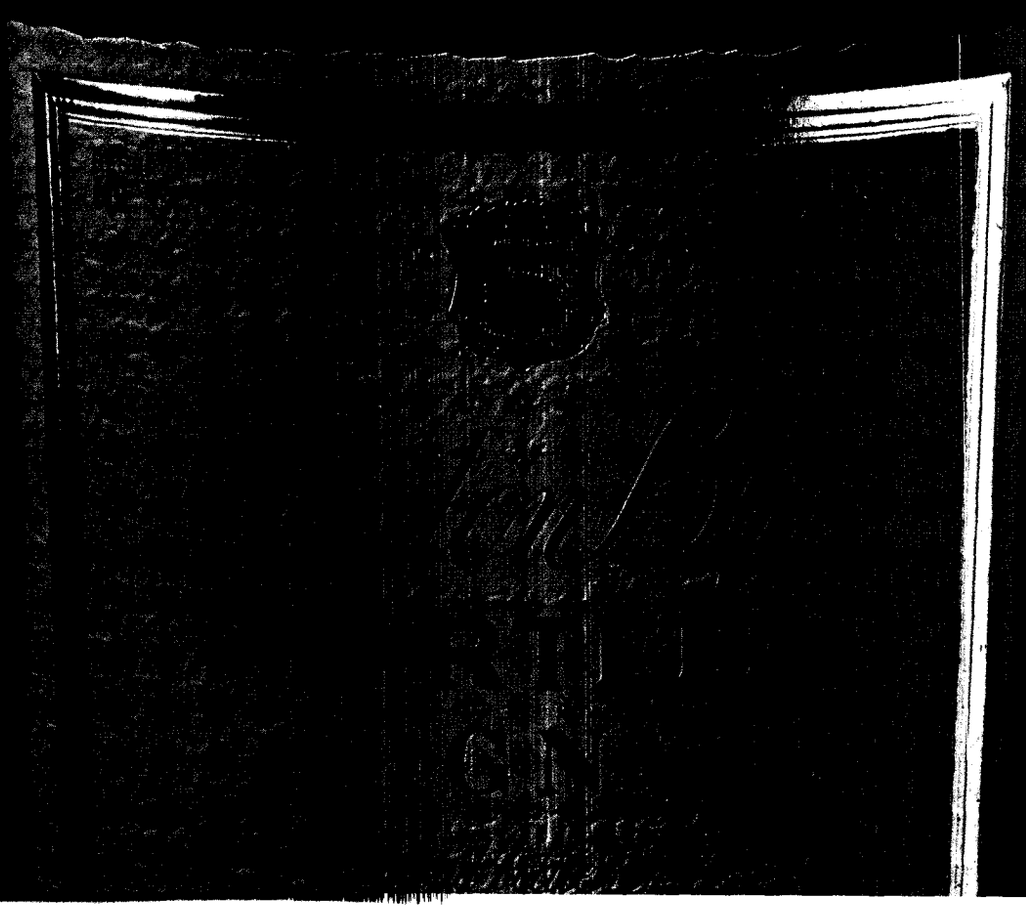

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